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KING'S CHAPEL SERMONS

BY

ANDREW PRESTON PEABODY, D. D., LL. D.
PREACHER TO HARVARD UNIVERSITY, AND PLUMMER PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN MORALS, EMERITUS

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PREFACE.

The sermons in this volume were, all of them, preached at King's Chapel, and most of them written for that use, — the greater part of them during the illness and since the death of my very dear friend, Rev. Henry W. Foote, under whose pastorate I deemed it my privilege to place myself after I resigned my office as Preacher to the University. The last three sermons were printed at the request of the Wardens and Vestry, and are now reprinted.

There are in Christian theology certain fundamental truths and in ethics certain eternal principles and laws, which should underlie all preaching, and must therefore often reappear from beneath a wide diversity of subject and of form. Repetition of this type I should be sorry to have shunned.

These sermons were written with no purpose of publication. They were adapted, to the best of my ability, to time, place, and occasion. If they are of any worth, they are on this account of none the less worth ; for long experience has taught me

that there are no spiritual idiosyncrasies, and that it is such views of truth and duty as seem to be of limited and special application that meet the needs of the largest number and diversity of minds and hearts.

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KING'S CHAPEL SERMONS.

SERMON I.

PREACHING.

"The foolishness of preaching." — 1 Cor. i. 21.

Paul meant and felt what he wrote. He knew, no man better, what human wisdom was, outside of the gospel. At Tarsus, where he was brought up, there was a celebrated school of philosophy, and in his Epistles there are tokens unmistakable, though few, of his knowledge of Greek poetry, philosophy, and dialectics. He was also a pupil of the Rabbi Gamaliel, whose maxims and apologues shine like gems among pebbles in the dreary pages of the Talmud. Yet this wisdom had been of the feeblest influence and the scantiest service. In the Gentile world the disciples of the several schools of philosophy were skillful phrase-mongers, but had not learned of their respective masters the virtues which adorned their lives and made their memories fragrant, while licentiousness and profligacy, unveiled and unbridled, were eating out the vitals of

civilization throughout the whole Roman empire. Then as for the Jews, they had given themselves up to heartless ritualism and pietistic immorality, insomuch that the very foremost among their doctors of the law recommended a fictitious consecration of one's property as a device for evading the support of his aged parents. I will not say that they were going from bad to worse; for I can imagine nothing worse than this.

While the wisdom of this world was thus coming to nought, here were those poor fishermen and peasants, whose Galilean accent could provoke the ridicule of a maid-servant at Jerusalem, and whose Greek, when they came to speak and write it, bristled all over with strange Hebrew idioms, making their thousands of converts, and that, not to a mere form of words, but to a renovated and hallowed life, apart from and above the surrounding world, in the felt presence and power of Almighty God. Paul marvels at himself, too. He had indeed no equal on the earth; but he did not know it. In the very letter from which I take my text are that portrait of charity, or love, and that chapter on the resurrection, which transcend, the former in beauty, the latter in grandeur, all literature outside of the Bible. Yet it is only unconscious, self-forgetting genius that can write thus. It was because he felt himself the least of

the apostles, and not worthy to be called an apostle, that he could thus spontaneously surpass the most consummate grace and the loftiest flight of ambitious rhetoric. He therefore undervalued his own work, as in profound lowliness of spirit he wrote, "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

Now what was this foolishness of preaching, this preaching which Paul so characterized, as compared with the profoundness of the Greek philosophy and the keen subtilty of the Hebrew sages? It was the simple story of a lowly life and an ignominious death, about which, indeed, clustered traditions of certain marvelous phenomena beyond the ordinary range of human experience, — traditions true, I have no doubt, yet which, even in that credulous age, men were very slow to believe concerning one who had died the death of a felon slave, and which could have been made credible then, as they can be now, only by unmistakable tokens of a divineness in the sufferer such as has been seen in no son of man beside. That such a story, of one so despised and rejected of men, told too by men who for the mere telling of it had become, in his own words, "as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things," should have wrought on the souls of multitudes with transforming efficacy seemed to Paul, though fact, stranger than fiction; and in his

modesty and self-distrust, placing himself on the same footing with the other apostles, he accounts his and their preaching as foolish and weak by any human standard, though he is compelled to own that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men."

Undoubtedly, there has been, and there still is, preaching that is really foolish, a great deal more which, though not unwise, is feeble; and I pity the man, however able he may seem or be, who can treat of themes worthy of an angel's tongue, and not feel, as Paul did, humbled in view of the grandeur of his work. Yet still, as in the primitive time, while the gospel of Christ is the prime moving power in the spiritual world, preaching is its prime conductor to the human soul, and mankind can as little dispense with it now as when the gospel was Heaven's fresh gift.

As, after our summer vacation, we recommence our public worship here, it may not be unfitting for us so to consider together the worth of preaching in itself that, irrespectively of all personal preferences, we may give it our loyal attendance and our hearty support.

Let me ask you at the outset: Did it ever occur to you what strong testimony is borne to the Divine element in the Bible by preaching of all sorts taken in the aggregate? Preaching from specific texts

of Holy Writ was a Jewish custom, of which we have one instance in our Saviour's own ministry, and it has always been usual in the Christian Church, first from the Old Testament, and for many centuries from both the Old and the New. Now is there any other book that could have stood such use, — that could have furnished texts for so much foolish, dull, stupid, untimely, wearisome preaching, and not have been degraded, vulgarized, brought into utter disrepute? I have no hard-and-fast theory of inspiration. Indeed, it is simply absurd to place in the same category psalm and proverb, history and prophecy, tradition and parable. The Bible is a miscellany from divers and unlike times and authors, and you can no more make an authentic statement of the common characteristics of its contents, than you can of the common characteristics of Paradise Lost, Bacon's Essays, and Wordsworth's Excursion. But, if I may use a figure which recent events have made more familiar to us than we would gladly have it, a stupendous tidal wave from the Spirit of God swept over the Hebrew mind through successive ages of patriarch, sage, and seer, culminating in him who spake as never man spake beside, and the Bible bears the record of high water-mark all along those centuries. Therefore is it that nothing can make the Bible seem less than its name, — the Book beyond and

above all others; while in its turn the Bible elevates and hallows what else were mean, paltry, trivial.

Then, too, these texts are often in themselves the best possible preaching, and in the hearing and the memory have and retain the most intense emphasis. The text often puts the sermon to shame, and humbles the preacher, who feels in attempting to reach it as the Persian archers must have felt when they aimed at the sun; but like them he attains the higher mark because he aims at what he cannot reach. Simply because these sacred books were written under so strong a spiritual impulse, they abound in single sentences and phrases fraught with vast and deep significance, which take a clinching grasp on the conscience and the emotional nature; and while for the few who would read continuously and thoughtfully it may be a disadvantage to have the Bible so broken up into aphoristic sayings, to the large majority it is of unspeakable gain as to impression and influence. A text often strikes deep, and leaves a lifelong mark. Not only are our Saviour's own teachings full of these utterances complete in themselves, — Paul also has many such texts; they abound in the Psalms and in some of the Prophets; and of the Proverbs, — the collective proverbial wisdom of ages, — while many are merely shrewd maxims of

worldly wisdom, quite a large proportion of them are inestimably precious as warnings and counsels appertaining to the moral character and the inward life. Every one whose mind has been directed to the subject, especially every preacher, has known instances in which a single text has been spiritually the making of a man, and many more instances in which important, critical emergencies of temptation, trial, or duty have had their complexion and issue thus determined.

Only a few days ago, I met with a striking instance of this in the Life of Bishop Selwyn, of New Zealand. The English have obtained the greater part of New Zealand in ways which only a conscience of the peculiarly English type can justify, in a series of petty wars in which the natives have fought for their homes, and manifestly with right on their side. In one of these wars, an English officer, fatally wounded, fell into the hands of the enemy, and was cared for through the night with the utmost tenderness by a Maori youth, a Christian convert, who was one of the native soldiers. This youth, finding that the officer was suffering from burning thirst, and knowing that the only accessible spring was within the English lines, risked his life to obtain water for the sufferer. The next day he was slain in a second conflict, and in his pocket was found, written in the Maori tongue,

the text, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." Who can doubt that this simple text had brought that poor boy into the closest spiritual kinship with him who on the cross prayed for his murderers?

As regards the preaching, however far below an ideal standard it may be, if sincere, earnest, and on a level, as it must generally be, with the receptivity of the hearers, it can hardly ever be wholly in vain. If what is said merely sinks into the memory, it must be borne in mind that memory is more a seed-plot than a grave, — that what seems buried there beyond hope of resurrection may, under the suns or showers of some later day, spring up and bear fruit. Nor is there ever reason to despair of a more speedy harvest. The preacher's work is well typified in the parable of the sower. Much of the seed may fall on stony ground or on the hard-trodden wayside; yet it can scarcely be that some of it will not alight on soil that is all ready for it. And where the soil takes it in, it has a wonderful germinating power. It may be the least of all seeds, some suggestion of a fragmentary truth, or of a neglected duty that seems of very slight concern. But what may spring from it, or how wide or high may be its growth, God only knows. There are unnumbered ways in which the life of God may plant itself in the soul. There is not a single ethi-

cal or spiritual truth, however secondary or small a space it may hold in a summary of belief or duty, that may not become a saving truth. The infinitesimal grain, sowed in faith and love, and received into a waiting soul, may shoot up into an overshadowing tree, and not only so, but, as with the banyan tree, branches from it will fall to the ground and take root, so that a whole forest, or rather a richly fruitful garden of the Lord, may grow from a single tiny seed. Now there may be on every occasion in which there is faithful preaching some individual hearer for whom the right moment has come, — a moment that shall be an epoch in his spiritual life worthy of his eternal gratitude.

But while what I say has a plausible sound, there are probably some here who would rejoin, "I go to church from Sunday to Sunday, and yet hardly ever hear anything new, and what little is new is either rhetoric no better than I might read or hear elsewhere, or else the discussion of dogmas, which at best are of minor importance, and certainly are of no practical use or moral value." I would ask in reply, Why should not religion have the aid of rhetoric? especially when sacred rhetoric has held in all times a foremost place in literature as regards both majesty and beauty. Then as to discussion, there is of necessity a philosophy of religion, no less than of physics and of morals, and

though you may live decently and virtuously without understanding either of the three, if either of them is worthy of your interest, certainly that which appertains to God and to your own immortal nature is not the least so. But with the preacher worthy of his office, rhetoric and philosophy are the means, not the end. His endeavor is to impress upon his hearers some one of the few fundamental truths of the spiritual universe, — truths which could be stated in a single brief sentence, which a child of five or six years could understand, yet which in their magnitude comprehend all space and time and being. These are truths which you do not doubt, but which you ignore simply because they seem so obvious; and the preacher's hope always is that he may present some one of these old, trite, word-worn truths in a form in which it may not glance from your mind, but may strike in and strike deep. I should not want to go outside of the (so-called) Apostles' Creed, as it stands over the altar before you. There are several of those articles, which most or all of you believe, any one of which, could you be made to feel as well as to believe it, would create for you the very highest type of character in heart, soul, and life, — would fit you for all that lies before you equally in this world and in the world to come. If I could only send one of you home to-day with a true heart-faith in the first of

those articles, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," I should have done for you an eternal life-work. Some of the greatest preachers, some who have filled this pulpit to the special edification of their hearers, have as preachers never done anything else than to put their whole might of mind and soul into what might seem the merest truisms. Dr. Walker, in the memory of many of you a favorite preacher here, and certainly one of the greatest minds of his time, never undertook to prove anything that his hearers were supposed to doubt, but employed his unsurpassed power in making them feel what perhaps every one of them professed to believe.

Now this preaching seems to me of unspeakable worth. We find fault with the world, with our world, with society as it is; I cannot but think that it would be immeasurably worse without preaching. It is of immense importance that these old stories be told in new ways, these old truths repeated in new forms, what belongs to all time clothed in the raiment of our own time, from week to week and from year to year. Public worship alone will not meet all our need. There must be in worship a certain sameness, else it loses both in dignity and in comprehensiveness. There are very strong grounds for preferring for the public service a liturgy, if, as here, it can be varied or set aside on fit occa-

sions; for by this repetition from Sunday to Sunday of the same holy words, the selfsame channels of devout thought may be worn deeper and deeper for an ever fuller flow. But because of this sameness of worship, there is only the greater need of the fresh stimulus to thought and feeling which preaching ought to supply, so that if any of the really devout men and women are in any respect careless livers, they may be led to watch while they pray, and that those for whom the worship is a mere solemn form may be roused to a consciousness of its reality, and of their own close, inevitable, eternal relation to its objects.

In my boyhood the old-fashioned ministers used to pray — I must have heard it scores of times — that their listeners might have a hearing ear and an understanding heart. A most fitting prayer. The hearing ear is more common now than then, not, I fear, because of greater willingness to hear, but of the less frequency with which overworked bodies obey the Sunday summons. Nor is the understanding mind wanting. There is fully enough of criticism. But the understanding heart is what is needed above all else. The affections are cognitive powers no less than the intellect. The heart knows truth by its affinities, as the mind verifies it by reasoning. What we feel, we know by a consciousness more trustworthy than logic. Now

what we most of all need in our worship is to feel when we enter the hallowed courts that we are really coming by prayer, hymn, and chant into closer communion than is our wont with the ever-present Infinite Love, that we are invoking nearer converse with that Infinite Love as incarnate for our salvation, that we are listening not to man's wisdom, but to the voice of God floating down these Christian ages, yet no less truly his than if it fell upon our ears from the parted heavens.

If we come with hearts thus disposed to listen, and if the preacher be in earnest, I am sure that we shall find in the feeblest sermon the power of God, in the least wise sermon the wisdom of God, for our growth in grace and our training for heaven.

SERMON II.

CAUSATION, HUMAN AND DIVINE.

"Every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God." — HEB. iii. 4.

I DOUBT whether argument ever convinced a willing and sincere atheist of the being of God; but we who believe in God, and should be wretched if we did not believe in him, may sometimes find it profitable to recognize the ways in which he reveals himself to us, not in the outward universe alone, but equally in the phenomena of our own consciousness. The physical science of our time is currently charged with antagonism to religious faith, but wrongly. Some scientists have indeed gone out of their way to give vent to skepticism or unbelief; but when they have done so, they should, if honest, have spoken in their own names, not in that of science. Their proper work is to describe the house, not to tell who built it. If they give themselves faithfully and conscientiously to their work, we, who cannot work with them, ought to be ready to accept their conclusions, however opposed they may be to our previous opinions. But when

they say, as some of them say, "The house is so perfectly built, and is so thoroughly provided with the means of keeping itself in repair, that no architect or carpenter can ever have had anything to do with it, — it must have built itself," — they are no longer on their own ground, but on ground on which unscientific common sense is fully competent to try the issue with them, and has an undoubted right to affix to such utterances the stamp of folly and absurdity. But entirely aside from scientific theories, there are routes by which the soul can hardly come to itself without at the same time coming to God. One of these routes is so obviously suggested by my text, that I cannot but think that the writer had it clearly in his own mind. He passes from man, the builder, the cause, to God, the builder, the cause; and from what man, but from the self, — the only being so intimately known to any one of us as to be safely reasoned from?

Whence comes the idea of causation? Not from the outward world, but from your and my own consciousness. Suppose yourself, my friend, with intellectual endowments equal, nay, superior to those of the greatest man that ever lived, with the power of observation, of retentive memory, of communication with other men, and with ample knowledge of the past. You are acquainted with all the facts and laws of the outward universe up to and beyond

the results of the latest scientific research, and with all that is taking place among men. But you are a mere observer and knower, not a doer. You have no active powers. You cannot even move a finger. There is not an object in the universe which you can change, modify, or influence. Nor have you any desire to act. You are content with this passive life, and cannot even imagine any other. You know not even what it is to will. Yet everything else is the same as it is now. There are precisely the same connections of objects and events in time and space. Before your eyes the magnet attracts the iron bar; the lever raises the huge rock; the falling river impels the floats of the wheel; the ball speeds from the cannon's mouth; the grand panorama of nature has its coincidences and sequences; you see the tides corresponding to the phases and terms of the moon; you are warmed by the sun at noonday, and chilled by the blasts of winter. Now all this you might see for a lifetime, for an eternity; yet the idea of a cause would never occur to you; you would never say to yourself, "The moon makes the tide rise, — the sun pours out the genial rays that gladden me, — the river forces the water-wheel to revolve." You would know that certain phenomena always succeeded certain other phenomena; but they would be to you like the figures in a puppet show, which follow one another

round in the same order without acting on one another. All that you would really see in nature or trace in history would be uniform antecedence and consequence, not causation. If you were the highest intelligence in the universe, and yet destitute of force and of will-power, the conception of causation would be impossible for you; for causation would never have entered into your own experience.

But you yourself are a cause. Causation has been a part of your hourly experience from the very birth of your self-consciousness. You produce effects and witness them, and learn from them your own causative power. Moreover, of the objects under your immediate control, none change their place or form without your causative agency. They are inert unless you start them from their inertia by doing something to them or with them.

Now go back one step farther. You are a cause. But what of you or in you exerts this causative power? Not your hands or your feet. Not the organs that belong to your material frame; but your will, of which those organs are but the instruments, without which they would be as inert as the lifeless objects around you, and to which your hands or your feet are fully as subservient as are the inanimate instruments which you move with hand or foot. It is not your hand, but your will that lifts, displaces, readjusts, repairs, destroys,

and when hand or foot will not of itself suffice for the behests of the will, that same will arms or reinforces hand or foot with tools, implements, material agencies, mechanical powers, that do its bidding.

But this will of yours is immaterial, if anything is so. You know not where it dwells in you. No scalpel can lay it bare; no microscope can discern it. It is in full strength when your body is weak; and is never more vigorous than it often is when the body is dying.

Now throughout the entire range of your activity this unseen, non-material will is the only ultimate cause of everything that you do, the cause of all the sub-causes which you put in motion.

The case is the same with your fellow-men. Throughout the entire sphere of human activity this immaterial mind-power of the will has produced all the changes that have taken place. It has developed human nature, has given birth to civilization, founded and overthrown empires, created history.

I go beyond the human race, and find in the animals with which I come into intimate relation the same will-power. Their intelligence is less than ours, but such as it is, it is the cause of their action. They move at haphazard no more than we. They have purposes, and carry them into execution.

They plan, and put into motion the means for their plans, not infrequently with a wise choice of instruments and a sagacity of foresight hardly less, nay, sometimes even more than human.

Thus, with regard to a very large portion of the universe around you, and as to a great part of the objects and events within your near cognizance, mind-power, will-power, is the sole cause of motion, activity, creation, destruction, change.

Beyond this range, however, there is perpetual motion, activity, creation, destruction, change. There is a vast system of harmonious action and inter-action, embracing the sun, planets, and far-off stars, the primeval forests where human foot has never trod, the ocean which man commands only by obeying it, the winds and storms which man propitiates only by yielding to their sway. Then, too, there are innumerable races of minute, many of them microscopic, beings that work with a precision transcending human skill, build better than they can possibly know, construct honeycombs, coral reefs, layers of the earth-crust, which bear all the characteristics of plan and purpose, showing that their individual will-power is made subservient, often in accordance with mathematical laws that can be known only by superior intelligence, to ends of which it is impossible that they should be conscious. In the larger races of animals, too, of

whose action we see and know that the will-power is the immediate cause, there is maintained, from age to age, a proportion of numbers, a balance of power, a mutual serviceableness, which is beyond their individual wills, yet which, so far as we can see, preserves among them a maximum of sentient enjoyment with a minimum of privation and suffering; and this condition of things is, as is universally admitted, an effect, and must therefore have a cause, that cause being constraining and inevitable law in the opinion even of those who own no lawgiver.

Still farther, while man is consciously a cause in the entire sphere of his activity, there is in his collective experience the same phenomenon that we recognize in animal life. There are the filaments of a plan, of a system, running through all human history. Man's separate volitions are sporadic, independent, mutually incongruous, yet they work together in large and in the long run with benign purpose and happy issue. Unplanned good springs from evil that is planned. Aggregated selfishness works beneficently. There is from age to age development, progress, amelioration, beyond individual purpose, yet through the causative agency of human wills which accomplish their immediate ends. There is, it is admitted on all hands, a higher, deeper cause in history than the individual wills

that make it. If not God, there is law in history, and even the wrath of man praises law, if not God.

There is, then, outside of the sphere of causation under the control of finite minds, and somehow, subtilely, but inevitably working within that sphere to systematize the aggregate results of voluntary causation, a causative power. What is that power? Within our own sphere of action and of observation we know no cause but mind, intelligent will. We have no experience, no conception of any other cause. Beyond that range there are effects in a multitudinous, unbroken series, and cause, or causes, there must needs be. Yet not causes; for the universe in all its parts, the heavens and the earth, organisms animate and inanimate, man, so far as he is not self-governed, are not systems, but a system. Science at every stage of its development is more and more unifying. Its imponderable forces are no longer many, but one. Its last word, development, evolution, is but another name for unity. If from pristine, homogeneous star-mist has bloomed forth the infinite diversity of world, element, being, then by the strongest title is the universe one, and its cause one.

As I have said, the effect is inconceivably vast. This immense orb on which we dwell is but an atom in infinite space, a faintly twinkling star in the firmament of Mars or Jupiter, invisible from Sirius,

and yet age after age it holds its place and pursues its undisturbed path among these balanced worlds. And while these worlds with every accession of telescopic power come forth rank beyond rank, the astronomer knows to the hundredth part of a second where to find each of them, night after night, year after year. One system ; one cause, and that cause a Mind infinite beyond our thought, yet manifest in myriads of forms, in its unifying wisdom, power, and love. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?"

Thus, from our own consciousness and experience, from our own causative power, from the causes which we are, we pass by inevitable inference to the Supreme Cause, the infinite God ; and this inference is equally clear and imperative, whatever our theories of creation may be.

Still farther, the omnipresence of this first Cause, his presence with us, his providence over us, is demonstrably certain, whatever may be our theories of creation. There may have been specific acts of creation, there may have been special interventions of his providence for the safety and well-being of his children, and such has been the prevalent belief of wise and devout men in all ages. But suppose that an initial forthputting of the Infinite will-power launched the universe into being, with its

multiform capacities for becoming all that it is or ever will be, time is but a category of finite being; in the Infinite Mind, past and future, twin eternities, are present. He spans the eternities, and in every stage of development He is no less present than if every stage were a fresh creation. Nay, every stage is a fresh creation; for the omnipotent will must be incessant, eternal, else not omnipotent. He is no less the immanent cause than the first cause. The universe subsists, the vast plan unrolls by his unceasing fiat. Let that fiat be for one instant withholden, the universe vanishes like the shadow of a dream. Law is but a provisional fiction of philosophy, — the non-religious name for modes of administration in an orderly universe. Law has a real meaning only for potential law-keepers, for men and angels, not for sun, stars, and oceans, — for intelligent causes, not for unintelligent effects. What we call the laws of nature are laws for us, and we disobey them at the peril of comfort, substance, life. But there is no power of obedience in the inanimate, unconscious objects to which we apply that term. They are no more capable of obeying a law than they are of writing epic poems or solving algebraic equations. Cut them loose from the infinite, unceasing will-power that holds them in their places and their courses, and no law would remain for them but that of inertia,

which would either arrest them in eternal stillness or launch them into internecine chaos.

I trust that I have not a single hearer who doubts the being of the infinite Creator and Father. If there be such a one, as I said at the outset, I should not expect to convince him by argument. I would only beg him to probe the depths of his own consciousness, and I believe that he will find there uneffaced testimony of the Being in whom he has his own being. But I am myself profoundly impressed, and would fain impress you, with the identity in kind of our own causative will-power and that which in its infinity we recognize and adore in the universe. This will-power is the portion of divinity by virtue of which we are partakers of the divine nature, and which by its fitting use may make us children of God in a far more intimate sense than by his creative power or his protecting providence. He has endowed us with a will-power kindred to his own, that by means of it we may fulfill his purposes of love, that in employing it we may be followers of Him as his dear children, that by its pure, faithful, and beneficent use we may make our humanity divine. Be it ours, then, to use it as a stewardship from Him, in his work, in subserviency to his will, to his praise and our own eternal well-being. With this supreme aim and endeavor let us, my Christian friends, prepare to

commemorate at the holy table the redeeming love of him whose will-power in action no less than in suffering, in his walks of untiring mercy no less than beneath the shadow of death, had for its expression, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," — "Father, not my will, but thine be done."

SERMON III.

"THEREFORE," OR THE WORKING FORCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Therefore." — 1 Cor. xv. 58.

To me the most impressive word in the Bible is the "Therefore" in the last verse of the fifteenth chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. The chapter transcends in grandeur everything else in the literature of all lands and ages. When I read portions of it as I stand by the lifeless form to be borne forth for burial, I always feel as if I were marshaling a triumphal procession over conquered death and the grave robbed of its prey. The Apostle rears a ladder from earth to heaven, its foot planted against the great stone rolled from the Saviour's sepulchre, its topmost round resting on the sapphire throne, and on rungs that are successive day-beams of the resurrection morning he leads up his tried, tempted, persecuted, death-bound fellow-disciples to those serene celestial heights where they die no more, and are as the angels of God. But he was not the man to show gems and jewels of priceless worth and amaranthine

beauty merely to feast the beholder's eye, and to wake idle dreams of heaven. When he has brought his readers to the very threshold of the golden gates, he converts the glorious vision into a working force. He swoops down, and brings them down with him from the realm beyond the clouds to the dim and dusty plain of common life and daily duty. "Therefore" (and the whole power of the world to come is condensed in this single word), "therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

"Therefore" is the most important word, the one fundamental idea in religion and in ethics. Religion furnishes the therefore for morality, belief for conduct, faith for character. No truth without a therefore can be an essential truth. No imagined duty, not backed by a therefore, can be a duty. No one can appreciate more highly than I do, in their place and for their uses, what are commonly called the evidences of Christianity; but immeasurably beyond all other evidence I cannot but place its capacity of shaping conduct and moulding character after its own divine ideal, — in fine, its clustered therefores, its collective and multitudinous therefore, addressed to men's affections, conscience, and will, now in strains gentle as of the wind-harp, sweetly, softly stealing into the inmost heart; now in thunder tones, to wake the impenitent or sluggish soul to impending temptation or neglected duty.

Let us consider the therefores of Christianity, the truths that involve obligation, constrain to duty, and give shape to character.

First of all, there is no truth appertaining to the attributes of God that has not its therefore. Is he omnipotent and all-wise? Then I am relieved from the horror which I could not but feel in a world governed by chance, caprice, or unwisdom. Cares he for man? Then I can feel safe in committing myself to the unexplored future; I can maintain my courage and my working force under conditions that seem most adverse, if they be divinely ordered. Is he my Father in a more intimate sense even than is implied in this dearest title of human protection and benignity? And am I sure of all a father's readiness to forgive, and of the helping spirit with which an Infinite Father cannot but prompt, second, and crown every right endeavor and high aspiration? The inevitable inference is the privilege and joy, even more than the duty, of penitence and worthy purpose, of trust and prayer, of gratitude and love, of constant obedience and faithful service. If God is, he should have his part, his controlling influence, in my every experience, in my every act, in every waking moment of my life.

As regards Jesus Christ, he stands in no relation to man which has not its constraining, imperative

therefore. Our every conception of God is necessarily anthropomorphic. He is, indeed, infinite to our thought, but infinite only in attributes which we can behold in man. He may have other attributes; but if so, we cannot know them. It is in human form alone that we can see and know God; therefore is it that Jesus says, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," and "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." So true is this, that no sooner do men look away from Christ than their conceptions of God grow dim and distant; his providence becomes a myth; his fatherhood, a fond delusion; even his detached personality fades from the thought; and in a second or third Christless generation the only God that would be recognized would be the unconscious forces of nature. Christ then lies behind all the therefores comprehended in our idea of God. God in Christ is the only God that the Christian knows.

Still further, in showing us God, Christ has given us the pattern of a divine humanity, and his example is at once our inspiration and our guide, if we would make our own humanity in any humble measure divine. When we consider what virtue was before him and is now where he is not, — how he reversed the moral scale, and gave the supreme place upon it to qualities of character, humility, and the like, for which he had to pick up

names from the rubbish and dust-heaps of language, and to pass them through a cleansing baptism, — we see of what immense moment it is that we follow him; nor is there an incident in his conduct, or a parable or precept that fell from his lips, that has not its therefore; that does not bid us to do, and above all to become and be, what is Christ-like.

Then, again, what constraining power there is in his love, in his cross, in that supreme hour when in the depth of mortal agony he manifested, as on earth has never been seen beside, the incarnate love of God! Love has its intensely mandatory therefore. To feel it is to obey it; and he best knows Christ who, in beholding his life, his cross, can say with the profoundest emotion, "Herein is love," and can embody its therefore in those sweet and simple words of the old hymn, —

> "Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul, my life, my all."

But the clustered therefores which have Christ for their antecedent depend entirely on the truth of his record, and this is the sole question of vital importance as regards the Bible. For me, indeed, it contains much more than this. So far am I from doubting the divine inspiration of the Hebrew seers and poets, that, on the other hand, I am in full sympathy with the Christian fathers of the Alex-

andrian school in ascribing like inspiration to the saints and sages of the Gentile world who also helped to prepare the way of the Lord; nor can I fail to find rich spiritual food in those Hebrew lyrics, which Jesus was undoubtedly wont to sing with his disciples, as we know that he did at the paschal supper. But these matters, however interesting, are of no essential importance. Moses and Elias are not our teachers; nor has the Hebrew law any claim on our allegiance, except as its provisions are sanctioned or reënacted by a higher and permanent authority. What it concerns us to know is whether the life of Christ is authentic.

By modes of historical criticism, which, if applied to the history of New England, would make John Winthrop and John Endicott mythical personages, and Sewall's Diary a forgery of a date subsequent to his death, it is perfectly easy to show that the Gospels are the untrustworthy productions of the second or third century. But after more than half a century's conversance with the Protean forms of skepticism, — most of which are new, not because new-born, but because, long ago conquered and slain, they have of late been galvanized into a ghastly semblance of life, in which by their mutual contradictions and inconsistencies they are fast throttling one another back into the grave, — I feel a far stronger assurance than that of my unques-

tioning youth, because resting not on tradition, but on evidence, that these Gospels are the faithful portraiture of the one divine life that has been lived in this world of ours; and as for the fourth Gospel, I know of no narratives of any time or land that throb so intensely with the vivid emotions which only an eye and ear witness can feel as the story of the raising of Lazarus and that of our Lord's own resurrection. Were they anonymous, I should know that the author had been there; and in matters of less importance, often in a single phrase or word, I have encountered, without seeking them, like tokens of the personal presence of the writer in the scenes and events that he describes. But if these Gospels are authentic history, they then attach, not probability, but certainty to Christ's claims on our faith in all that he teaches and manifests of the divine, and thus give to the therefores emanating from him and from the Father who sent him an emphasis which could not rest with an added stress did they fall upon our ears in words of God from heaven.

The therefores of God and Christ and the gospel all centre, blend, culminate, in the therefore of the life eternal, of which the gospel is full, as to which Christ utters no uncertain voice, and which is the heritage from God for every child of his that is fit for, or, as it seems to me, even capable of it.

Eternal life, continued identity; not the power of assuming an alias at death and sloughing off the old sins with their inherent miseries; not the capacity at any time of so escaping the past that its shadow shall not rest on the future; not a regenerating bath from which the Ethiopian can emerge white and the leper spotless; — but the living on of the man as he is, his reaping as he sows, nay, while he sows; for in the soul of man seedtime and harvest are synchronous; what he does, what he says, what he wills, he assimilates, makes an inseparable part of his own self, so that sin, not produces, but is misery, — goodness, not produces, but is happiness, — the visible harvest delayed, it may be, for months, for years, for a lifetime, but in the interior consciousness the seed beginning to bear fruit the moment it is sown. The intrinsic fitness of the right, its inseparable connection with well-being, that of its opposite with ill-being, is not even of divine ordination. It is coeternal with God, and were he in a single instance to disconnect goodness from well-being, wrong-doing from ill-being, in that very act he would abdicate the throne of the universe. The eternal life, then, of the Christian revelation is eternal blessedness for pure, true, and virtuous living, with no amnesty in any state of being for moral evil while it lasts, or while its inevitable consequences remain unspent.

The therefore of the eternal life thus comprehends all that man ought to be in conduct, in heart, in soul.

The truths that I have named embrace, not indeed all of Christianity, but all of its essential working force. I think that I am authorized to say this, when I find in the catalogue of all saints, with equal tokens of Christ-likeness, men and women who have these only in common. Cheverus, John Howard, Keble, Judson, Joseph John Gurney, Joseph Tuckerman, Madame Guion, Elizabeth Fry, Mary Carpenter, Florence Nightingale, represent the widest variety of dogmatic and ritual belief and position; yet who can trace in either of these a trait of kindred to the Saviour that is lacking in either of the others? Indeed, were I to look at this moment for those who impress me as nearest to their Lord, I should be carried where I have the least dogmatic sympathy. Who so reproduces on the earth the image of him who showed himself most divine in that he went about doing good, as the Sister of Charity, keeping her lone watch by some pest-stricken victim in one of the noisome dens of foul contagion in Madrid or Naples? Were her Lord himself laid on that bed, she would not nurse him more tenderly and lovingly. Why? Because she sees the typical God-man in the sufferer whom he calls his brother,

and has him, and him crucified, in her heart of hearts, dearest and best beloved. Why should I scant my reverence for her, as supremely blessed of the Lord, on account of what seem to me her errors, — some of them, it may be, glimpses of greater truths than those with which I would replace them? She worships the crucifix; but was not God in Christ as he hung upon that cross? She asks the saints to pray for her; and is there a saint in heaven who is not ready to pray for her? Has she not always with her unseen witnesses, who waft her supplications on the breath of their own? Nay, is there not one, the King of saints, who ever lives to make intercession for her and for them all? But when the poor man dies, she will still pray for him. And why not? Who will dare to say that any soul of man at death drops out of the reach of God's eternal love? And if not, why out of that human intercession in which man makes the closest approach that he can make to Him whose name is Love? I would beg not to be mistaken. The usurpations, pretensions, and corruptions of Romanism are worthy of abhorrence where they are paramount, and are among the most just and fitting objects of dread in our own country. Yet I believe that there is nowhere a more vivid sense of divine realities, a more truly filial piety, a more entire consecration to the work for which

Christ lived and died and ever lives, than in unnumbered loyal members of the Romish Church; nor can I see anywhere among Protestants a power of faith and holiness adequate to cope with its wrongs and errors, so that the best that can be hoped is that in God's early time the flame of ardent devotion kindled at its own altars will burst into a consuming, cleansing, purifying fire for its falsities, its superstitions, and its tyranny.

As for the dogmas that separate Christians from one another, it is certain that revelation has no clear voice; for equally learned and impartial interpreters of the Scriptures have drawn unlike conclusions from them: and it is no less certain that the Spirit of God does not give light upon them; for none differ more widely concerning them than men whose lives equally show that they are led by the Spirit. Moreover, these dogmas relate to the divine rather than to the human aspects of truth, and to themes beyond the scope of exact definition. They belong solely to the philosophy of religion, which is no more determinate or determinable than the philosophy of being and of mind. This latter is as old as history; yet it has no truths established beyond dispute, nor is it any nearer being a positive science than it was in the time of Thales or of Plato. But it has kept open a large and lofty realm for thought and speculation, and

by the very unattainableness of absolute truth in its infinite scope has nurtured in successive generations many of the greatest minds of the race, — minds that needed the unattainable to give full tension and vigor to their aim and endeavor. There is, no doubt, in this department absolute truth; but it is too large and vast for the finite mind to grasp in its entireness. Hence the divergent philosophies, which are such fragments or partial aspects as individual minds are capable of taking in. In like manner religious philosophy has the infinite for its field; and the separating dogmas of sincere Christians represent their several types of mental receptivity, and are distinguished from one another less as truth and falsehood than as partial truths.

These dogmas form no part of the working force of religion. Thus the essence of the divine nature has no practical bearing. I know not but that the triune formula may be more true to the philosophy of the divine than my more simple conception; but neither of them has a therefore. The therefores spring solely from God's relation to man as Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, which he is equally to all who derive their views of him from the Christian revelation. As to Christ, there is broad room for speculation in those words of his, "No one knoweth who the Son is but the Father;" but it is only what we really know of him that can affect

the character. I am by no means disposed to deny that Christ's mediatorial work may have its divine as well as its human side; but it is the human side alone which can win for him our dearest love and closest following, nor do I find reason in the Christian character of those who take widely different views of the divine side of the atonement to suppose that they are any the more or less loyal disciples for their divergent creeds. Every one capable of philosophy ought to have his philosophy of religion, and thus to have the mind filled with ennobling thoughts on themes sublime and inexhaustible. The only thing to be deprecated, as equally unchristian, absurd, and mean, is when these opinions on subjects so vast and grand that an archangel might not dare to dogmatize about them are congealed by a freezing mixture of self-conceit and scorn into ice-balls with which rival sects rejoice to pelt one another, — battles of pygmies, which would be simply ridiculous, if they did not leave on the bosom of society such rankling wounds and ghastly scars.

As to church rites and organisms, I cannot regard them as an essential part of the working force of Christianity, first, because Christianity has accomplished its work equally well under a great diversity of forms, and, secondly, because there is absolutely no divine directory as to these matters,

since the Apostolic Church in some respects is confessedly not a model for subsequent times, and in others its actual organization cannot be so determined as not to leave large space for doubt and difference. I am inclined to Archbishop Whately's opinion, that the organism of the Church was, by the divine purpose and wisdom, left open, to be determined by Christian expediency, and I am by no means disinclined to believe with him that the episcopal form of church government proffers strong claims on the ground of expediency. Certainly the episcopal function as exercised in this country has justified itself by its fruits, both in the (so-called) Episcopal and in the Methodist Church. But for the analogous, yet utterly unlike, government of the English Church, there is no justifying reason, since until within the present generation the episcopal office has been fully as much secular as sacred, while all pretense of apostolic succession is stultified by the fact that the bishops have been nominated and forced upon the dioceses by the prime minister, sometimes an atheist, sometimes a profligate, so that the archbishop must in numerous instances have been conscious of mendacity, when in the office of consecration he speaks of the work whereunto the Holy Spirit has called the bishop elect.

I have spoken of the therefores of Christianity.

I want to say a word as to the peculiar need of them at the present time. Man, because he is not a brute, but a reasoning being, has always a right, when bidden to do thus and so, to ask, Wherefore? Now what reason is to be given for the duties, the violation of which where we ought least to expect it is one of the salient features of our time? Shall it be expediency? If one would look far enough, he would see that the right alone is expedient; but to apprehend this, one must often look beyond earthly probabilities unto the unseen future; for when the coveted gain or indulgence is close at hand, the risks of exposure and shame seem infinitesimal in the comparison. Nor yet does the good opinion of society offer a sufficient motive; for while society frowns on full-blown depravity, in some quarters it tolerates, and in none regards with emphatic disesteem, habits and indulgences lying in the doubtful border land between virtue and vice, which is Satan's favorite hunting-ground. Nay, men are often advanced to places of trust which open the way to their ruin for the very qualities for which in a less fast age they would have seemed utterly unworthy of confidence. Only a therefore of omnipotent force can meet the varied and urgent needs of tempted and militant humanity.

I know that it is often said, "It is no matter

what a man believes, if his conduct is right." By parity of reason, "It is no matter on what foundation the house rests, if it only stands." There are houses on the sand, which make as fair a show as those on the solid rock, till the floods come and the winds blow; but only those on the rock will weather the storm. It is of the utmost importance to the right-doing man why he is doing right; for his reasons may be such as opportunity, temptation, evil example, will silence and sweep away; and I know of no reasons that may not be thus disposed of except those which are embodied in the therefores of the Christian faith. Loose views as to the worth of religious truth and of fixed religious beliefs are already having their inevitable result in a correspondingly loose, vacillating, and low moral standard. Morality never has subsisted, and never will subsist, without religion. As well might you attempt to raise grapes from a rootless vine. Conduct always needs and craves a therefore. The world, the flesh, and the Devil know this, and are always ready with their therefores, which would be logical and convincing were God and Christ and the eternal right out of the way. An intense and efficient emphasis is given to their therefores by the (so-called) religious teaching which substitutes doubt for faith, and parades non-beliefs as the last words of science and of truth.

Once bring agnosticism from the museum and the laboratory into the arena of daily life, you will unchain every foul lust and baleful passion, enthrone Satan, and make this good world of ours a very pandemonium.

SERMON IV.

THE PRESENT ASPECT OF CHRISTIANITY.

"The everlasting gospel." — Rev. xiv. 6.

Balaam and Caiaphas, as prophets, hold a place not unlike that assumed by Renan in his History — more romance than history — of the People of Israel, in which he says, "The Jewish and Christian histories have made the joy of eighteen centuries, and though half conquered by Greek rationalism, they have an astonishing efficacy in ameliorating men's morals. The Bible in its divers transformations is, in spite of everything, the great consoling book of humanity. It is not improbable that, wearied by successive bankruptcies of liberalism, the world may again become Jewish and Christian." I like that phrase, "successive bankruptcies of liberalism." Nothing could have been more happily said. Pseudo-liberalism has had a long series of what it has deemed final dispensations and undoubtedly destined triumphs. One of the most curious chapters in the history of mind is that of the phases of thought, science, philosophy, speculation, which have been going to put an end to Chris-

tianity, but which have themselves come to an early, if not an untimely end, and which would be forgotten but for obituaries of Christian authorship; and in every instance Christianity has made capital of the bankrupt assets, and has gained wealth and strength from the genius and learning invested for its overthrow. When I was a divinity student, there survived so much of the eighteenth century infidelity of England, synchronous with, though less virulent and spiteful than, that of France, that we were expected to toil through the dreary pages of Leland's "View of Deistical Writers," — now a cemetery in which he and they rest together in a death-slumber that will never be disturbed.

In great part by means of these bankruptcies Christianity stands to-day on a firmer foundation of evidence than ever before. Feeble defenses have been broken down, only to reveal their needlessness, only to lay bare the foundation on the Rock of Ages which they often hid from sight. I hesitate not to say that there are at the present time stronger reasons for believing Christianity and its Author to be the record and incarnation of the divine truth, law, and love, than have been manifest in any preceding age since that when Christ in person bore witness of himself, and the Father who sent him bore witness of and with him.

The strongest evidence of a religion must lie in itself, — in what it has done, in what it does, for and in its disciples. To the individual soul this, so far as it exists, is more than demonstration. It is consciousness, which if we deny, we can admit no other evidence. This was well expressed by the man who, when Jesus had touched his eyes said, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Thus, unnumbered Christian believers can say, not "I believe," but "I know." They are distinctly conscious of having derived from Jesus all that they have and are that is worth having and being. But this consciousness is of evidence only to the individual soul. Perhaps the Pharisees were not wrong in rejecting the blind man's testimony. But had Jesus passed through an asylum for the blind, and every one of its inmates had received sight, and had testified that the first object on which his vision had rested was that blessed countenance, I do not believe that the most stubborn Pharisee of them all would have been left in doubt. Now it is precisely this cumulative testimony of consciousness that we have in behalf of Christianity. You, my friend, or I, may not be a sufficient witness. We may be deluded as to the source of what we see fit to call Christian influences. But the cumulative testimony of individual consciousness may be overwhelmingly convincing. Were

you to expunge from the world's record for these eighteen centuries the names of those who have expressed their sole or supreme indebtedness to Christ for all that they have been in purity, in integrity, in philanthropy, in the gentler virtues of social and home life, in the traits that command reverence and love, would one in a thousand of truly and thoroughly excellent men and women be left? Were you to try the same experiment in your own community, in your circle of intimacy, would you not have to strike from your list the greater part of those who stand foremost in your esteem for their virtues and graces of character? Still farther, of those very good people who disclaim special obligation to Christ, would you not find that almost all of them had a Christian training, that there was a time after they became eminently good when they ascribed their goodness to Christ, that their quarrel has really been with his church and not with him, and that since disclaiming him they have not only grown no better, but have shown acid, acrid, or bitter traits of character, which were not so manifest while they called themselves Christians? We have thus a long array, multiplying from year to year, of those whom their fellow-men have crowned, and who cast their crowns at the feet of Jesus, and, themselves deemed preëminently worthy, cry, "Thou alone art worthy."

But the piling up of an ever greater mass of individual testimonies is not all. More is needed from religion now than ever before. Men's needs of it and from it were never so many, broad, and deep as now. The life-work of a true man is now more varied and complex, demands at once more weighty purpose and more delicate discernment than in times of inferior refinement and culture. The Christian worthy of the name is thoroughly with the world, and no less thoroughly not of the world; and for the former of these requirements there is needed a profounder ethical wisdom; for the latter, a more rigid self-denial and a more earnest self-consecration, than when the world's life was more simple and less engrossing. The Christian spirit, like the circumambient atmosphere, to be breathed and felt, must be in closest contact with all objects, interests, and events of the earthly life, and yet must retain its own heavenly aroma as sweet and pure as in the upper sky. Now there are those, we know those and not a few, who as professedly and distinctively Christian men and women, in high social position, in public station, in mercantile and professional life, in situations where one might expect to see busy pleasure-seeking, or sordid worldliness, or selfish ambition, show themselves the close followers of Christ, and with undimmed lustre reflect the brightness of his image.

Then again, as regards the temptations to be overcome in a virtuous life, religion has a severer test, a harder strain than in any previous age. The lower forms of sensual indulgence are more appetizing than ever before, their grossness more hidden, their relations to things innocent and right largely multiplied. At the same time there is no earthly pursuit or interest that has not reached what seems its climax, as to the estimated value of its objects, the eagerness of competition, and the success without discredit by the sacrifice of principle. Yet there are those who have the full mastery over passion and appetite; and there are those, and not a few, who, on one or another of the world's great race-grounds, and earnest for the prize, yet consciously risk success by maintaining their integrity, and whom neither bribe, nor fear, nor favor can turn aside from the right. Now of those who resist and subdue the temptations which the apostle enumerates as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, by far the greater part profess themselves learners and followers of Jesus, and of the residue most or all have been trained in his school and have never meant to leave it.

We have like testimony from many who hold a foremost place in the scientific world, and their testimony was never before worth so much as it is now; for if science can ever supersede Christianity,

its marvelous advance in our time must have brought it a great deal nearer the epoch of its victory. But it is still true, as it has always been, that a large proportion of the leaders in science give loyal adherence to Christianity as at once inspiring and satisfying their spiritual consciousness, and in full harmony with the last results and the highest attainments in their several spheres of investigation. During my term of active service as a professor in Harvard University, I had among my colleagues as heads of the scientific departments men, all of them of more than local, some of them of world-wide reputation, all of them Christian believers, two of them deacons of the University Church, and three of them, Peirce, Bowen, and Cooke, in courses of public lectures and through the press, not doing the pitiful work of what is called reconciling Christianity with science, but claiming and vindicating for Christianity its queenly rank and rightful sovereignty in the whole realm of science. Among scientific men the disposition to ignore Christianity has, I suppose, been most prevalent with the advocates of the evolution-theory. Many of them, by no means hostile to religion, have professed agnosticism. Darwin evidently reached this state of belief or non-belief, and I cannot but think that it was from the ever closer scrutiny of material forms, while

ignoring the Eternal Spirit which pervades them, that his mind suffered atrophy, and that in his latter years he had no eye for scenery, no love of art, no sense of beauty, no capacity of enjoying poetry or the higher forms of literature, deficiencies which he owned and lamented when it was too late to supply them.

My late colleague, Asa Gray, of Harvard University, second only to Darwin in the development and advocacy of the evolution-theory, in full scientific sympathy with him, was an earnest and devoted Christian. In his firm faith and steadfast loyalty as a disciple of Christ, he found nothing to limit or check his boldest researches and most latitudinarian beliefs as a scientist, and because he lived in adoring communion with the supreme Source and Archetype of grandeur and beauty, he had heart-room for all that is sublime and lovely in the outward universe; his soul was full of poetry; taste and imagination had with him their due place, office, and honor, and all departments of knowledge were as congenial to him as if none had had the primacy in his pursuit.

We have, then, in behalf of Christianity, in itself considered, a threefold cumulative testimony beyond what any previous age could offer, — that of an enlarged mass of individual experiences of its worth and power, that of increased moral demands

to which it has shown itself adequate, and that of culminating science which has not transcended its need or outgrown its sway.

The next point that I would urge is this: It was never so clearly demonstrable as now that Christianity, as a beneficent force, has always been and is at the present moment the most beneficent and hopeful force in the world's history and condition, and is therefore preëminently divine.

There have been three principal types of civilization. There is, first, that of the Greco-Roman world, which was progressive, but in a bad direction, and happily for mankind self-limited. Intellectually and morally it reached and passed its climax in Athens and in Rome, and thenceforward the only growth was in extravagance, in luxury, in every form, not excluding such as are hardly imaginable now, of sensual indulgence and of artistical, not to say refined, profligacy. It became extinct by inevitable suicide. Its vices had grown beyond the endurance even of a sin-sodden world. Then there is the Oriental type of civilization, as of China, Japan, and Corea, which was stationary for more centuries than have left their authentic record, which at the beginning of this century might have been described in terms that would have been equally true a thousand years ago, and which has had its only progress forced upon it from

Christendom. Then we have Christian civilization, always and everywhere progressive in the right direction, both in its benignant ministry and in the proportionate numbers of each several community or nation that come within its pale. The principles that underlie Christian civilization are distinctively Christian, fully developed only in the teachings of Christ, and foreshadowed before him only and very dimly in Judaism, from which Christianity sprang, whether, as Christians believe, by express divine ordinance, or, as all others must admit, by natural outgrowth. These principles are human brotherhood, the greatness of service, and community of interest among men and nations.

1. Human brotherhood. In the older time the life of man was a column, with its base buried out of sight and its capital in the clouds. A sameness of origin and of destiny was not even imagined. Men, therefore, were in isolated groups, with no mutual rights or obligations. Why should they not, then, enslave, rob, slay one another at pleasure? Language retains traces of this sentiment. Our word *pirate* (from the Greek) denoted in the early ages an honorable profession, that of an adventurer, when robbery was the only object of hazardous adventure. Several of the most honored heroes in the Greek mythology were pirates. Slavery of men of another race was a natural and legitimate

right. But when men saw one another as children of the same Father, as invited to the same heaven, as of equal calling and privilege in the Church of Christ, race exclusiveness became an absurdity, and slavery was no better than sacrilege. The Church so riddled and undermined domestic slavery that it collapsed and vanished, and could never have been revived in European Christendom. It had its resurrection in America because the arm of the Church was too short to reach it; it was doomed by Christian sentiment long before it ceased to be, and was kept in being and strengthened for its final death-struggle solely by that worst of all despotisms, democratic tyranny. But it now lies too deep for the possibility of a second resurrection. With it has passed or is fast passing away whatever can hinder the individual race or man from becoming all that it or he can be. Human brotherhood is free competition in the life race, and free competition is unimpeded progress, unlimited attainment.

2. The greatness of service. When Jesus with the basin and the towel did for his disciples what not one of them would have done for another, and hardly for him, he created a new order of nobility which already outranks all others. Hereditary nobility depends for its continued existence mainly on the prestige which it lends to patriotism, public

spirit, or philanthropy. Men can continue to be great only by being great servants. Thrones are learning this, and there is not a monarch in Christendom who would dare to rule otherwise than for the real, imagined, or pretended good of his people. Even in war, in itself utterly unchristian, the palm of transcendent heroism is passing from those who destroy to those who save and bless. Is there one of you who can name at this moment a general in the Crimean war? But you all remember Florence Nightingale as its heroine. It is beginning to be generally admitted, and nowhere more fully than here, that specially privileged men and women have a right to their place only on condition that they coin their powers into utilities, that they use their wealth as God's almoners, that they avail themselves of their higher position to give added fullness and impetus to the flow of beneficent example and influence.

3. Community of interest. Jesus, in making self-love the measure of brotherly love, established the principle, till then unimagined, that there are no antagonistic interests, that in human society the well-being of any one member is, so far as it can be felt, the well-being of all, that in their different spheres man is to man as the foot to the hand, or the eye to the ear. This principle, as between man and man, has always been acknowledged, and in

some measure recognized in action, in Christian society. But for ages it was ignored as between nation and nation, and until quite a recent period nations sought to outwit one another in tariffs and treaties, imagining that of two countries one could gain only to the other's loss. All this is exploded now, and it is admitted that classes of men, communities, and nations are prospered and enriched by one another's successful industry and enterprise. This principle is now made the basis of treaties and of such legislation as may affect international relations, and if any proposed measure seems on its face exclusive and selfish, it is defended either legitimately by showing that it really benefits both or all parties concerned, or sophistically by attempting to blind the public to its partiality and injustice. The incorporation of this principle into political action tends to render mutual helpfulness, instead of antagonism, the prime aim of diplomacy, and thus in coming ages to make of Christendom, and ultimately, when prophecy shall become history, of all mankind, a mutual-benefit society.

The principles that I have specified are already so established that they cannot be reversed, they are all self-perpetuating in their very nature, they are all prolific in means and agencies for the advancement of the race, and they thus ensure for Christendom and for the world, so fast as it shall be christianized, a permanent civilization.

Under each of these principles there are numerous sub-principles which are fast forcing their way into permanent recognition; but there is not one of them, nor is there at this moment a single principle, rule, or maxim in political economy, sociology, or civil administration, that has the sanction of statesmen worthy of the name, which cannot be traced back to, and deduced from, the record of Christ's teachings. To be sure they are not all written there. Nor yet did Euclid write the rules used by surveyors, navigators, engineers, architects, builders, and workmen in a thousand different arts. Methusaleh's lifetime would not have sufficed for this. Yet they are all comprehended in that little manuscript which came from Euclid's hands more than two thousand years ago. In like manner the Gospels contain all the real political science that there is, though, were it written out in detail, it would suffice to stock a library.

Now, what I would say under this head is that the principles which underlie our civilization and must make it permanent, were never so fully comprehended or so clearly manifested in their Christ-derived and distinctively Christian character as now, so that history at this moment bears fuller testimony to the divine and therefore everlasting element in Christianity than ever before.

The reasons for belief in Christianity which I

have now specified are not only more weighty at the present time than at any preceding period, — they are constantly growing in weight and force; they are in their very nature progressive and susceptible of ever new development, and therefore give sure presage of the everlastingness of the gospel. Be it ours, then, to become partakers of its eternity, of God's own eternity, according to those blessed words of the Lord, which, if they give law to our lives on earth, shall sound the note of triumph over our graves, "He who believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

SERMON V.

IMMORTALITY. AN EASTER SERMON.

"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" — Acts xxvi. 8.

Why should the continuance of life through the death-change seem incredible? If it be strange, things equally or more strange form a part of our daily experience. Were we spectators from another sphere of being, I doubt whether a life beyond death would appear to us as strange as many of the processes of nature which we are constantly beholding without surprise. Who would believe it possible that a tree whose boughs would shelter an army could grow from a seed no larger than a barley-corn? Then, too, life is wonderfully persistent. Centuries cannot kill a seed. A tree never dies a natural death, or rather it dies every year, and its life passes into a new outer layer which replaces that of the former year, so that, but for parasites or destructive insects, the tree-life that began to be before Homer was born might be in full vigor now. Mark, too, what a multitudinous life that gave no sign at Christmas is on this Easter

morning bursting from nooks and crevices where it lay dead, heaving the teeming earth, throwing up the loosened clods, heralding a resurrection that floats in the sunlight, warbles in the groves, clothes the fields with verdure, festoons the hillside with bloom, arrays the forest in robes of gladness.

What means still more is the intimate connection of death with life. Everywhere death is the minister of life, and life sustains and renews itself by death. The seed, when it falls into the earth, springs into life only through death. Its dissolution, decomposition, decay, is the very process by which it becomes ten, twenty, or a hundred fold of the life which it surrendered. Unnumbered forms of insect life are developed from the death, the shroud, the sepulchre, of the very life which they renew and continue. In higher forms death is the perpetual fertilizer of life, sustains life, feeds life; and all the life that now exists on the earth is the product of death. Man dies daily, and lives because he dies. It is only by the sloughing off of dead portions of the life that has been that we retain our hold on the life that is; and let death cease in any portion of the vital organism, life expires also. In fine, throughout all nature death is literally swallowed up of life; and as mere physicists, as mere observers of things as they are in this world, we might raise the apostle's shout of

defiance, "O grave, where is thy victory?" for through the whole realm of things seen, life is most manifestly and gloriously the conqueror of death. Why, then, is it incredible that in the higher realm of mind and soul there is the same triumphal march of life in the footprints of death, and over the graves in which what we lay is certainly not the life that we have known, but only its clothing, its husk, its sheath?

That man may live on when he dies may appear still more clearly when we appeal to the testimony of our own consciousness. There is in me, I am sure, a supersensuous life, a life the elements of which did not come to me through the senses, or from the outward world. When I recall the past, the long past, as if it were present, even if I am but reading records made upon the brain, I am conscious of a difference between the record and the reader. The record might be there entire, and will be there when I am dead if it is there now; but because the selfhood that reads it is not there, it cannot be read. When I say I, when I think of my own conscious identity, I have a consciousness which the outward world did not and could not give me, and for which I cannot account by any material organism. There is in my body no more reason why I should feel myself a conscious unit than there is for a like consciousness in a tree,

shrub, or flower, which is equally with myself a unit, an individual, yet evidently without knowing it.

Moreover, there are portions of this selfhood which have absolutely no relation to the senses or to the outward world. My moral selfhood is not developed from, but superinduced upon, my material existence. It is real, intensely real, more so to my consciousness than is the bodily life. It is independent of that life. It can make me supremely happy in a suffering body, and it has, as we all know, made men peaceful, happy, jubilant, in the intensest bodily agony, nay, has induced men to suffer the torment of consuming fire for the cause of truth and right, and called forth their songs of glad triumph from the encircling flames. It can make me unhappy when the material life lacks nothing for full enjoyment, and I know that it has often made those who had the most profuse affluence of outward goods utterly wretched. Among the happiest persons that I have ever known are those whose happiness has had no feeders from the outside world, who have been for years deprived of the power of locomotion and self-help, with not an hour of undisturbed sleep or a painless waking moment. These persons have been made serene and happy by retreating from the world in which they seemed to live, and finding their actual abode for

mind and soul in a supersensual realm. I thus, in my own experience, and in what I have witnessed in others, have felt and seen a life that is entirely independent of the body and the outward world. It came not from the body, is not contingent on its well-being, and is consciously superior to it. Why should it die? God has given it a detached and separate being of its own. Why, then, may I not hope that it will share his immortality? Why should the dissolution of the organs by which it has held converse with the outward world be its dissolution? Rather, has not the body been as a prison wall impeding its freedom, and the organs of sense mere loopholes in the wall through which it has exercised not their, but its native power of perception, which may be only clarified and intensified when the wall is laid level with the dust of the grave?

If we admit the being of God, we admit all that is necessary to render the continued life of mind and soul at least probable. God is not subject to material conditions, and this, I suppose, is the only definition that we can give of spirit. There is, then, existence that is not material, and is therefore not necessarily liable to dissolution, and whatever the staple of this existence may be, there is no intrinsic reason why it may not be the substance of finite beings no less than of the Infinite. God is a

spirit, and may certainly have fellow-spirits, subject, as finite beings must be, to limitations of time and place, yet incorruptible and undying. Indeed, it is hardly possible that the Omnipotent who inhabits eternity should not have created beings who are to partake of his own eternity.

Still farther, how know we that life is in any sense material? It has never been produced from brute matter, but is always transmitted from pre-existing life. If it be material, the science of the present day knows as little of its essence as was known by the Greek philosophers twenty-five hundred years ago. May not life be in itself non-material, and thus not subject to the causes of decay which affect and ultimately disorganize the material body? If so, death is not the destruction, but the transfer, of life, its retreat from a tenement falling into ruin, its passage into a more congenial sphere of being. It may be that what St. Paul calls the spiritual body for lack of a better name (for he evidently does not mean body) is the life of our lives here, animates what were else a mere clod of clay, and imparts to it whatever in its life seems more than earthly, and that this is detached in dying, to live on in some other realm of the universe. This is so manifestly St. Paul's theory, and he so expressly scouts the very idea of a resurrection of the material body, that I never could understand

how such a conception ever found its way into a Christian creed, or how it is still maintained in that creed by many persons who believe St. Paul to have been divinely inspired.

The argument for human immortality derives great additional force from what I might call the authority of experts. We are wont to admit this even in matters of consciousness. We accept the testimony of those who have a clearer insight than our own. Indeed, the only use that we can make of the higher wisdom of saints and sages is to use their eyes while we are training ours, — to anticipate by their clearer views those which will become ours as we rise to the eminence on which they already stand. Now it is of no little evidential value that the best men and those most truly wise have been and are those who have had and have the strongest belief in immortality. I attach a high importance to this belief as cherished by Socrates, who, though by no means faultless, by far transcended in all the elements of his character the men of his time; by Cicero, for whom as a preëminently virtuous man in a corrupt age I have unbounded admiration; by Plutarch, whose home and private life were full of the graces, beauties, and beatitudes which are hardly ever seen except in choice Christian households. On this ground, were there no other, I cannot but regard the authority of Jesus

Christ as of immeasurable worth. Taking what is commonly called the lowest, but what seems to me the highest, ground concerning him (for there is nothing else so thoroughly great, noble, divine, as a perfect man), regarding him simply as a being of transcendent purity and excellence, in whom malice can find no fault, the most scurrilous infidelity can detect no blemish, whom the best men that have since lived have made it their highest aim to resemble, and yet have felt that their growth in his likeness was more than the work of a long lifetime, and that heaven is best described as the following of him "whithersoever he goeth," — are not the beliefs, the intuitions of such a being, worthy of our profound reverence, nay, of our implicit trust? If there sprang up in him so clear a faith in immortality that he could speak of it with the same confidence with which he spoke of the persons and objects visible around him, if that sight-like faith remained undimmed in the slow torment of the cross and framed the last utterance of his lips in dying, can we doubt that this faith had its basis of reality, that he spoke of what he knew, testified of what he had seen, and that in proportion as we approach his purity and excellence, our eyes, like his, will rest on a higher sphere of being, and death will in prospect be to us translation, ascension, immortality?

But we cannot be blind to the fact that the Christian faith in immortality which has purified the hearts, energized the lives, and gladdened the last earthly hours of myriads of disciples, has rested, not only on Christ's words of eternal life, but with few and rare exceptions, with more perhaps at the present moment than in all the Christian centuries before our own, on the resurrection of Christ as an historical and typical fact. I regard the historical evidence of this event as so imbedded in the life of the primitive Christian age as to be wholly unaffected by the mooted questions about the genuineness of the Gospels. My belief in its actual occurrence has been greatly strengthened by Baur, Strauss, and Renan, the three foremost among the skeptical critics of the New Testament. All three of them maintain that Christianity, which they consider as of more benefit to mankind than the aggregate of all other beneficent agencies, would have perished in its Founder's grave, had not his disciples believed without a shadow of doubt in his resurrection. They, however, ascribe this belief to a mistake of Mary Magdalene as to Christ's identity in the dim morning twilight, — the beginning and source of a series of optical illusions, which, unlike other phenomena of the kind, occurred by day as well as by night, and to large numbers of persons at the same time, and were repeated at intervals,

for five or six weeks; for all these writers admit the honesty of the evangelists in these minute details. According to these eminent critics whom I have named, the mistake of a silly woman has been worth more to mankind than all else that has ever been done for them, while yet a God of truth and wisdom governs the world. Now while I believe in the resurrection, and believe too in much else about Christ that I am not prepared to admit as to any other human being, I do not believe that there is in God's administration of the universe any departure from the laws which he has established for the twin eternities. But under those laws you and I are constantly performing supernatural acts. By our will-power we are every day and hour overriding, subduing, neutralizing, forces of nature, which were else supreme. The more there is of the divine in man, the greater is his power over nature. Why, then, may it not be in entire accordance with the laws of God's universe that the only man who has made humanity so perfectly divine that he had a right to say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," could equally say with literal truth, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again"?

Such are the tokens and proofs of human immortality. They have all along the Christian ages seemed sufficient and satisfying, and their validity

is at this moment unimpaired. Yet there is now as to the life beyond death much more of skepticism than there was half a century ago. Why is this? I think that it is due to the life that we are leading. All argument for immortality is feeble, if there be not in the soul a clear consciousness of that which is worth living on through death, of that which in its very nature is allied to God, and thus incapable of dying. I should not expect to convince of his immortality a man who is conscious of nothing but meanness, sensualness, and depravity; for these are a living death which no Easter morning rays can reach. But leaving such persons out of the question, I doubt whether there is among the really virtuous, pure-minded, high-minded, religious people of our time so much of the introspective and meditative habit as there was in a less fast and busy age. Now there is profound philosophy in the stanza of the familiar hymn, —

> "Be earth, with all her scenes, withdrawn;
> Let noise and vanity be gone;
> In secret silence of the mind,
> My heaven, and there my God, I find."

The evidence of immortality from without must have its echo from within, "in secret silence of the mind," in the soul's consciousness of what there is within itself that cannot die. I am no pessimist. I am sure that the world is growing better. I see,

as it seems to me, a larger proportion than in my earlier days of those who have a right to feel themselves immortal, — of upright, faithful, God-fearing, man-serving men and women. But the life-current bears them on so rapidly, over so many shallows and through so many eddies, requiring eyes always open before and behind, that the inward eye remains closed, and they fail to read the record of eternal life that is written in their pure thought, honest purpose, and loyal service. Look, then, ye who sincerely love and seek the things that are excellent, look into your own inmost souls, and if there be aught that is Christlike in them, while we echo with the disciples the shout of joy, "The Lord is risen indeed," there shall come to you the blessed assurance of the risen Saviour, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

SERMON VI.

A GOOD NAME. A GOOD FRIDAY SERMON.

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." — PROV. xxii. 1.

"He made himself of no reputation." — PHIL. ii. 7.

EARLY in Lent, this year, these two texts impressed themselves on my mind as belonging together, and as affording an eminently fit theme for the season, and for this day. They will lead us to dwell less prolongedly than is our wont on the detailed events of the crucifixion-day; but they present one of the great lessons of the cross, which we may need to learn, in which we may have been remiss, and to which if we give diligent heed, we may become more truly cross-bearers, and thus more richly partakers of the benefits of the Saviour's passion and death.

Of all possessions that man can give or earth can yield, a good name is the most precious, nor does anything attainable transcend it in value except the traits of character that deserve it. Nor yet is there any gift that a man can have, which can be made worth more than this as an instrument of

benevolence and philanthropy. It is therefore of no little significance in the sacrifice of which we to-day celebrate the consummation, that it should have been said of Jesus Christ that he "made himself of no reputation." The proverb and the example taken for my double text suggest the questions, How is a good name to be obtained? How to be used? When to be sacrificed?

How is a good name to be obtained? Not by seeking it. It is almost the only quest which negatives the maxim, "He that seeketh, findeth." Love of human approbation at the best overshoots its mark; at the worst is the most perilous of soul-traps. The love of approbation is indeed an inborn sentiment, and has therefore a rightful office, and that office is, I believe, to give the soul a hold on its Creator and Father through an approving conscience, which is nothing less or other than the voice of "God that justifieth," — a voice which alone can fully satisfy this native sentiment, else insatiable, which we cannot exterminate, but may thus thoroughly sanctify. The over-earnest quest of a good name among men makes one more covetous of the form than solicitous for the soul of goodness, and contents itself with a mere veneering of virtue, which shines while it is kept freshly varnished, but is always liable to peel off or to be chipped away. Then, too, characters of this type

change with their latitude, and conform with alacrity to a low or vicious standard, if it be that of their surroundings, so that there have been instances, — I have known such, — in which the same man has been in unlike communities both chief of saints and chief of sinners. But if an unmerited good name be obtained, I cannot understand how it can be enjoyed. How utterly mean and despicable must be the interior consciousness of one who walks in a vain show, and is self-condemned by all the good that is said or thought of him! He who wears a mask must also be in perpetual terror lest through its seams and sutures there be caught glimpses of his real face

The only good name worth having is that which one can give himself, and can call God to witness that he deserves it; and this may be, when one can say within himself, "I have no ruling aim, no settled purpose, no supreme desire, save to become all that God would have me be, and to do all that God would have me do;" and when he can say, too, in his daily prayer, in words in which Holy Writ expresses the mind of Christ in his supreme self-sacrifice, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is within my heart." But one deceives himself in saying this, and falls short of deserving and probably of receiving a good name, unless the whole of God's law, and especially that

part of it which nailed Christ to the cross, the law of love, is in his heart. There is an exclusively pietistic type of goodness, though claiming to be Christian, utterly un-Christlike; sincere, it may be, but grim, stern, and loveless; when fervent, lighting no kindred flame. In the days when asceticism was regarded with superstitious reverence, men did get a good name by isolating themselves from all the charities and even the decencies of life; and there ministered at the most sacred altars of religion saints whose presence, even in the outermost courts of our sanctuaries, we could not tolerate. But austerity, separatism, and sanctimony in our time get a bad name, not only for those who affect them, which is a small concern, but — what is far worse — for the religion which they caricature. The only piety that deserves a good name is that love which mounts first to the throne of God, and, thence refluent earthward, makes itself felt in the amenities and charities of social life and daily intercourse, in spontaneous offices of kindness, in fellow-feeling with all that is worthy of it, in forbearance, pity, and hopefulness where sympathy must be withholden.

We now ask, What are the uses of a good name? First, for one's self. A good name in him who bears it should cherish modesty, humility, and the unceasing desire and endeavor to grow more

and more into all that the good name includes and signifies. A good name, even when best deserved, transcends the conscious merit of him on whom it is bestowed. I except, of course, the respectable, but small and diminishing, class of Christians who profess perfection, and whom I cannot pretend to understand. Leaving them out of the question, those most thoroughly deserving of a good name have constantly before them the ideal of perfect humanity but once realized on earth in him to whose cross we look to-day with adoring love, and with him in ever clearer view, they feel more the distance between themselves and him than between themselves and their fellow-men. They are aware, as those around them are not, of the limitations and shortcomings of their own goodness, of the earthward tendencies against which they have struggled up into the clearer air of Christian faith and endeavor, of the weakness in which their only trust is in Christ who strengtheneth them. They seem to have attained only because they are pressing toward the mark and reaching after the prize of their high calling in Christ, and whatever of reputation may come to them without their seeking should only urge their onward steps in the Christ-marked way on which they may grow more worthy of it.

A good name is also a potent means of usefulness; and in order to this, it must be used

cautiously and wisely. There are good names that are lent too readily. There are excellent men whose names in attestation of a cause or a person are evidence only of their own good nature and credulity. I hold in the highest esteem some persons whose signature of approval or commendation is not worth the ink with which it is written.

But while he who has a good name should remember that it is a power, and therefore to be used only in behalf of truth and righteousness, he is sacredly bound to shun the example of the servant who hid his Lord's talent in the earth. Like all other outward goods, it is his to use, to risk, to sacrifice, for duty, for the service of man, for the growth of the kingdom of God. The spirit of the cross gives the only rule by which it is to be held or yielded up, and there is hardly a lesson of the cross which those who ought to be cross-bearers are so slow to learn. Christians, in every other respect sincere and exemplary, deeming themselves disciples of him who made himself of no reputation, are often afraid to say or do what they ought, lest their good, and they for its sake, be evil spoken of. There are causes of human well-being constantly claiming advocacy, causes in their underlying principles as old as the gospel or as the throne of God, yet in a certain sense new, inasmuch as every generation requires old truth to be cast in new moulds,

old work to be done in new ways; and simply because we are not our ancestors, there must be in our philanthropy and propagandism modes, means, and measures with which they were not familiar. Now many good men, some of the very best men, judge of a cause, not by its merits, but by its reputed age, and are slow to sanction what in heart they approve, if it seems new. How natural, how like what is often asked in our day even by those who themselves belong of right to the Christian hierarchy, is the question put to the officers who made their report about him who spake as never man spake beside, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" A will favor this new Christian enterprise if he can see B's name attached to it. B cannot give it countenance till it has A's indorsement. In more instances than I can number I have been reminded of the old apologue, according to which the inhabitants of the earth agreed to raise a simultaneous shout that the dwellers in the moon might hear it, but at the appointed moment every man, woman, and child, except a man in China who was stone deaf, stood with suspended breath in a listening attitude. St. Paul's exhortation, intended only for the love-feasts, "When ye come together to eat, tarry one for another," is so broadened as to apply to all works of mercy; and so reforms lag and sometimes utterly

fail, because, while a multitude are all ready to follow, none dare to lead. The anti-slavery cause is a case in point, and a strong case. If fifty years ago the actual belief and feeling about slavery in Christian minds and hearts in the North and the South had dared to utter themselves freely and fully, slavery would have quietly melted away with the then passing or the next succeeding generation, and we should have been spared that fratricidal war, with its untold horrors, which was made necessary mainly by Christian, or rather non-Christian reticence. In the name of the crucified Saviour, and in the spirit of this day, I would say to every Christian man and woman, — Weigh carefully, prayerfully, the cause or work that claims your advocacy. But if you become convinced that it is Christ's cause, God's work, wait for no other good name before you give your own. You are not accountable to or for those who hold back; but you are accountable to your conscience, and to God whose voice your conscience is, if against your own sense of right and duty you hold back because others do. If yours is really a good name, it is so written in heaven, and stands there inscribed only in letters of purer light for any cloud that may rest upon it here.

A good name is often of unspeakable service in support of a reputation wrongfully maligned. The

cases are not infrequent in which unfortunate circumstances or baseless slander may expose a worthy person to obloquy. You, my friend, feel sure that some one within your familiar knowledge is thus wronged. You have entire confidence in his truth, purity, integrity. Will you leave him unbuttressed? Will you suffer him to be defamed, and be afraid to say a kind, strong word in his behalf? Do you not see, in your keeping aloof from him, no faint analogy to Peter's disclaiming all knowledge of his Lord when whelmed with reproach and shame? Will you not rather pledge your own good name, with all the weight that it may carry, in your friend's defense, and bear your part of his cross till it is lifted from his shoulders? Your good name may be the shield to cover him, while he proves his innocence and replaces himself where he stood before. By thus doing you may also have done much more than you meant or thought to do. You may not only have warded off undeserved blame, but have saved a soul from death; for men are prone to become what they are believed to be, and instances are not wanting in which men have come to deserve a bad reputation, because they first had it without deserving it. I could cite, also, cases in which a good name thus linked with a name undeservedly maligned has been all that kept the injured person from utter

despair, till subsequent disclosures restored the reputation wrongfully forfeited. Some years ago, in a commemorative service for a friend who had ministered at the altar for nearly half a century, I recalled a time when in his youth he had jeopardized, well nigh lost, his own fair standing with his college classmates, as the sole champion of a schoolmate resting under a false charge of dishonorable conduct; and I could not but date my friend's enlistment as a true cross-bearer then in his early boyhood, and not when he formally entered the ministry of the cross.

In the uses of which I have spoken, while the question is of duty alone, not of its consequences, there is little danger of the permanent loss of a good name, or of any serious detriment to it. It may be used over and over again, the better for the wear, — if mortgaged, to be soon redeemed; if obscured for a while, to shine the brighter; if loaned, to be repaid with interest.

As I have said, this day's lesson is, that a good name, like every other earthly possession, should be so held that, if there be need, it may be surrendered and sacrificed. Jesus made himself of no reputation. The original Greek is even stronger than this, — he "emptied himself" of everything that was not divine. That the perfect image of God in him might remain unmarred and unstained,

he counted the loss of all things else as gain. He flung away his reputation from the moment that he entered on his public ministry. Every discourse of his gave affront to the ritualism, the pietism, the aristocracy of his people. When Nicodemus wanted to hear him, he did not dare to come by daylight. We do not know of any actual disciples of his who were not in very obscure life, unless Joseph of Arimathea were one, and he was a provincial, remote from any centre of opinion; and of the poor men who followed him, none stood by him to the end. John alone was present at his trial before Caiaphas, but he made no demonstration of friendship, while Peter evidently denied him, not because he was afraid, but because he was ashamed to be accounted as belonging to him. Had the Sanhedrim respected him as an enemy, however much they hated him and desired to get rid of him, they would not have wanted him to die the death of a felon-slave. The cross — a punishment so disgraceful that the vilest malefactor, if a Roman citizen, was exempt from it — shows how literally he made himself of no reputation. Many of the early Christians were ashamed of the cross. This feeling underlies the various heresies which denied the crucifixion of the real Christ, who was said to have eliminated himself from the body of the dying Jesus. It was this same feeling that postponed the use of the cross as a favorite Christian symbol,

other symbols having had for a season the precedence of it. Such ignominy must have been to this divine soul far harder to bear than even the slow torture of that agonizing death; for the very traits of exalted spiritual perfectness, which might minister patience and fortitude in bodily anguish, could only increase the sensitiveness to scorn, contempt, and contumely. For Paul to glory openly in the cross of Christ was to cause that magnificent hero and martyr, whose equal the world has not seen since he went to heaven, to be whipped, like a fugitive thief, through city streets, and chained at Rome to a soldier on either side. After the pattern of their Lord, it has always been the doom of pioneers in religious and social reformation to encounter worse than death. Oftener than not they have gone down to the grave laden with the curses of those whom they strove to bless. Of the names now most honored, many bore the vilest reputation with the religionists and purists of their time, and in making up his jewels God has had to rake among the cinders, refuse, and dust-heaps of humanity in successive generations. Man follows his lead but tardily. He gave the Crucified the name above every name. Three centuries later civilized man did the same, and the cross now has the most honored place among the insignia of rank and power, — the symbol of the only empire which has never known decline, which holds myriads of souls on

earth and in heaven under its serenest sway, and shall still culminate till every knee shall bow to the cross, and every tongue own as Lord him who bore it, him whom it bore.

The cross-bearers who follow in his train, despised and rejected of men in their own time, now give their names to their ages, and the then great men who held them in scorn have a place in history only as the persecuters and murderers of those of whom the world was not worthy. So, too, in our time there have been men who in behalf of the enslaved in our land had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment, some of them brutally slain, whom in the last generation one hardly dared to pity, who now have the nation's gratitude and homage.

We see at this moment no demand for the entire surrender of a good name. Yet we know not what coming years may bring forth, and some who hear me may fall upon times which will require that they, like their Lord and Master, should make themselves of no reputation. The lesson of the cross and of this day is, — Win a good name by deserving it. Make diligent use of it in the service of God and man ; and if truth and righteousness shall ever demand its sacrifice, surrender it, in the assurance that it remains written full and fair in heaven, and in God's fit time shall be rewritten on earth.

SERMON VII.

WORD AND THOUGHT. FOR THE SUNDAY BEFORE LENT.

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." — PSALM xix. 14.

IN some respects this psalm is the most remarkable poem ever written. It is so as a mere poem. It contains, hidden beneath mistranslation, the most brilliant and sublime poetical image to be found among the lyrics of all times and lands. The word unmeaningly rendered *line* denotes a musical chord, a harpstring, and the passage, properly translated, would read, "There is in God's glorious works no speech, no articulate voice is heard; but their harpstring is stretched through the whole universe, and along that harpstring pass perpetual strains of praise to the Almighty from end to end of the world."

This psalm is also a marvelous compend of philosophy, — not that the author would have known the meaning of philosophy; but deep spiritual insight is profound philosophy, as it is well said, "The word of God most high is the fountain of wisdom."

The poet begins, "The heavens declare the glory of God," and shows how the infinite majesty and beauty of the Creator give tone to the faultless harmony of the universe, and are proclaimed in the music of the spheres. He then passes to what in itself is a still more resplendent manifestation of God. The law of the Lord is perfect, no less than the universe of his shaping. His statutes and commandments, if obeyed, would call forth from living souls a richer, more glorious melody than can ever sound from sun and stars. The poet has in his thought a spiritual universe, in which God's will is the will of every child of God, — a conception as far transcending that of a perfect material universe as soul transcends body, and eternity time. I know not where else to find so clear and grand an expression of the truth which lies at the basis of ethical science, and which alone can make morality divine and duty of sacred obligation, namely, that the fundamental laws of right and duty hold just the same place in the spiritual world that what we call the laws of nature hold in the visible universe, that they are in the profoundest sense natural laws, and that their violation is no less a disturbance of the true and fit order of nature than the slipping of a star out of place or a premature sunset would be. Thus we live in two universes; the one in which law is supreme and its subjects all obedient;

the other, in which law is no less supreme, but its objects are displaced, its forces out of gearing, its whole machinery disjointed.

The poet now turns to his own consciousness. "By them is thy servant warned," that he is not in full harmony with spiritual laws and forces. Yet he may be, and so may any one and every one of God's children, yet only one by one; and "I," the poet says, "I may bear my part in that perfect harmony. To that end, O God, cleanse thou me from secret faults, from sins to which my conscience is not sensitive, and restrain me from what I know to be sins, yet to which I sometimes yield. Let them wholly lose their dominion over me. Then shall I be in my right place, in harmony with God's universe, and shall no longer bear any part in the discord which pervades it. Thus, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer."

This psalm bears David's name; but these titles are not of the slightest authority. We do not know for a certainty that David ever wrote a psalm, and he could not have written this. It was evidently written by a good man who wanted to be better, — by one who is guiltless of what the outside world calls sins, but is still liable to sins of speech and thought, by which he strikes a some-

what jarring chord in the harmony with which he yearns to be in full attune.

In preparing for the approach of Lent a sermon for my wonted fellow-worshipers, one which I could preach to myself as well as to you, I found myself irresistibly drawn to this psalm as nowhere more appropriate than here. We, my friends, have a fair standing before the world. If there are any of us chargeable with open or gross guilt, I know not who they are. If in the old fashion I were to address sinners as a class by themselves, "He certainly does not mean me," would be the general feeling. Yet when we put ourselves in the position assumed by the writer of this psalm, alongside of the eternal harmony of nature, and the no less faultless harmony of souls in entire accord with God's eternal and all-embracing law, must we not, every one of us, detect in ourselves here and there a false note, a broken rhythm, a string out of tune, not, I will suppose, in outward deed or in habit that needs reform, but in the very things specified in our text, the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts? Sin, kept at bay at all other points, lays siege at the lips, and makes forays on the heart. Let us, then, recall some of the particulars in which we who mean to be good may find that we need to be better.

1. The words of the mouth. These have a double

importance; for soliloquy is not our habit. We talk to be heard. All our talking, whether answered or not, is *con*versation, which literally means not talking together, but being together, or taking a turn together. We are accountable, not only for what we say, but for its effect on those who hear, — a reason why we should put a double guard on our lips; for there is not a word that we ought not to say which may not give pain or do harm, and that often to more readily recipient souls than we imagine.

St. Paul says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt," salt being the Hebrew symbol of good sense or wisdom. There is speech that has neither grace nor salt, utterly frivolous, not harmful, and certainly to be tolerated in children, perhaps, too, in older persons, in extreme weariness, or under the necessity of sustaining conversation between those who have nothing in common; but at best a pause, in nine cases out of ten a discord in the spiritual harmony, certainly so when heart and mind can find anything worth saying.

Then there is grace without salt, acceptable before God undoubtedly, from minds that have no salt; yet there is a rich typical significance in the handful of salt that seasoned every sacrifice in the Hebrew ritual. There are devout and kind people,

of slender intellect, whose speech, though utterly insipid, is their best, is redolent of piety and love, and though it strike a feeble note, still swells the harmony that flows from faithful souls. But sacred words, uttered as a mere solemn form, in current pietistic phrase, or in the cant dialect of a sect, without fitness or point, by people who on other subjects are not wont to use words without meaning, are a hideous travesty of the melody in which they are designed to bear a part.

Then, again, there is speech which is all salt, with no grace, — withering wit, stinging sarcasm, covert innuendo, words that sound kind and sheathe their point only that it may pierce the deeper, poisoned arrows tipped with honey; and these often from persons of blameless life, sometimes under the pretense of candor, delicate moral feeling, reluctant duty, yet how harshly out of tune with the law of the Lord that is perfect, the statutes of the Lord that are right, the commandment of the Lord that is pure!

Equally out of tune is the talk about others to willing ears, when it is not true, just, considerate, and kind, when it assumes for conduct the worst construction, when it gives currency to what may be concealed without harm, when it spreads censorious rumors which it cannot verify. Such words leave a bitter taste in the mouth, and it is impossi-

ble to force them into rhythm, nay, not even when their aim is the advancement of some pseudo-religious purpose, as when heretics are ill spoken of for the glory of God.

Under this same head of harsh discord come all those utterances of peevishness, ill temper, irritability, by which, if ourselves out of gearing with things as they are, we are prone to diffuse our discomfort, to spread the contagion of our disordered nerves, and to take care that those about us shall be no happier than we are.

More than life and worse than death are in the power of the tongue. Its benignant ministries are most intensely needed to make life worth living, and on the other hand, had we any standard of measurement, we should find that in an orderly community, in a given time, less unhappiness results from great crimes and gross sins than from the cross, petulant, angry, censorious, slanderous, cruel speech of people who mean no harm, nay, who mean to be exemplarily virtuous.

I have nothing to say of profaneness, which common decency forbids, even where there is no religious restraint. But there are sincerely religious persons who lack reverence in speech, who can talk flippantly on subjects profoundly solemn, and whose levity of utterance on hallowed ground comes very near to the boundary which they would in no wise suffer themselves to overpass.

In view of all the diverse modes in which our words may be out of harmony with God's perfect law, of the manifold occasions for secret faults of the lips, and the insidious temptations to open sins of the tongue, I cannot but feel the truth of that saying of St. James, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man."

2. The psalmist names, in the second place, the meditation of the heart, which perhaps most moralists would put first, as the cause before the effect; but I am inclined to think that on the wrong side the relation is often reversed, words being the cause and thoughts the effect. Good thoughts, indeed, prompt right words; but wrong thoughts, bad thoughts, which might be evanescent, are fixed, intensified, made permanent by their utterance. To utter whatever comes into the mind is a pernicious habit. Frankness and honesty require no such thing. There are two reasons for suppressing bad thoughts. They may be suppressed for concealment, or they may be suppressed to get rid of them. The former is mean and cowardly; the latter is a sacred duty. If I cherish thoughts and express their opposite, I make myself doubly contemptible by secret sin and by hypocritical falsehood. But if there come to me thoughts which I do not want to cherish, of which I would gladly rid myself, and which I should be sorry to have recalled, silence is

the surest way of expelling them and keeping them out; while by giving them utterance I insure their emphatic impression on my own mind, their less unwilling recurrence, and probably their early cordial welcome. Shut the lips, then, against such thoughts as you would not harbor. Discontent unuttered is allayed. Peevishness suppressed is soothed. Anger left voiceless subsides. Bad temper is smothered when it cannot reach the air. Censoriousness loses its sting when it forbears using it. Groundless ill feeling towards others, of whatever type, if forbidden passage through the lips, loses itself in candid appreciation and fair treatment. The same principle applies to thoughts that transgress the bounds of soberness and purity. As regards every form of vicious indulgence, "the tongue is a fire," and transient, nay, unwelcome thoughts of evil, else harmless, by mere utterance may be kindled into a consuming flame. Thus sins of word and of thought may be removed together, and the heart in a large measure made true, kind, and pure by speech under due restraint and governance.

But negation is not melody. Silence is not praise. The absence of evil thoughts, though not discord, falls short of our due part in the harmony of living souls. There are heart-sins of omission, when God's works call forth no adoration, when his Providence fails to awaken gratitude or to bow us

in trustful submission, when we forget our divine sonship, when we let earth shut out heaven, and time eternity from our thoughts, when there is in us no soul-thrift, no culture of the immortal nature, no pervading and controlling purpose of truth, integrity, and faithful duty, no consecration to and of our lifework. All these gifts and graces of the inner man must be supplied, and with the spirit which, the more it has of them, craves the more, in order that our souls may be in full accord with the earth-born souls already made perfect in heaven.

Our text tells us how we may efficiently rid ourselves of secret faults and of willing sins, and become in word and thought what we ought to be. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight." "*In thy sight.*" A felt human presence is a power. God's felt presence is omnipotence, if we will make it so. Can we, while we are thinking of him, utter what we would not have him hear? Can we harbor in our minds at the same moment thoughts of him and thoughts that are not pure, reverent, and kind? So far as we make his presence a reality to our minds, our words and thoughts are all that they ought to be. But you say, "I cannot be always thinking of him." Very true, you cannot be always saying to yourself, "God is here." There are a

thousand other things that you must think about. Yet there may be a latent consciousness of his presence which may be sufficient and adequate for every need. You have seen a fond little child in the room with his mother, to all appearance so engrossed with fresh-bought toys or a new picture-book that he forgets that he is not alone. But if his mother leaves the room, he drops the toy, shuts the book, and follows her or waits impatiently for her return, showing that the consciousness of her loving presence was no less real than had he been nestling in her bosom. A like tacit, yet intensely realizing, consciousness of the divine presence may so blend with business, duty, recreation, gay and festive scenes, that in word and thought we may be as true to our God-born natures as in church or at the communion table.

This is what is meant by praying without ceasing. Prayer in its express form must have its seasons, and they can be but a very small portion of our time. But prayer has a spreading power, a self-diffusive efficacy, so that the fervent morning supplication may suffuse the soul till midday, and the smoke of the evening sacrifice begin to rise when the shadows turn. Thus Jesus lived, while on earth, in the bosom of the Father, — while he walked among men, in unceasing heavenly communion ; and as we learn of him, and follow him, and

breathe in his spirit, and make his life our law, the words of our mouth, as of his, the meditation of our hearts, as of his, shall be acceptable in the sight of God, our Strength and our Redeemer.

SERMON VIII.

THE LAW OF GOD.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." — Ps. xix. 7.

THE last time that I preached here, I spoke of this psalm as presenting a view of the completeness, precision, and inevitable working of the moral law of the universe, corresponding to the eternal and invariable laws of the material creation. I propose now to present more fully than I could then this view of the moral law. We call it the law of God. It is so in the sense in which it is your law and mine. It is greater than God's throne, nay, his throne rests upon it. He obeys it, rules by it, — else he might be Zeus, or Jupiter, the fickle, wayward, unrighteous tyrant of classic mythology, but not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father. The law is inherent in its subject-matter, in the very nature of things, and omnipotence can no more set it aside than it can make two and two five, or a circle equal to the polygon that incloses it. A Zeus might ignore the law; but though he held in his grasp all created beings and things,

he could not make the wrong right, or the right wrong.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, which it could not do, were it not perfect. If the mountain would have come to Mahomet, Mahomet would not have gone to the mountain. If we could twist and bend the law at pleasure, we should convert it, instead of its converting us. In our sins, great or small, we virtually try to evade the law, to get round it, to violate it and shirk its penalty, to make for ourselves a law independent of it, — but in vain. When we will not keep the law, the law executes itself upon and in us, body, mind, and soul, all three, it may be. To find this true is our unspeakable blessedness; for when we learn that we cannot escape the law, we embrace it, take it to our hearts, incarnate it in our lives; and then it becomes our light and our joy, and we experience the full meaning of those good words of the early time, "Great peace have they who love thy law." It becomes, too, not our restraint, but our freedom; for when the finite range of things forbidden by it is cut off for us, we emerge into unbounded liberty of choice in the infinite scope of things excellent, divine, eternal.

It is thus that the law and the love of God are in entire harmony; and his love without his law would be a curse, not a blessing; for we are con-

scious that our natures can be filled and satisfied with nothing less or other than inward purity, integrity, holiness, and God gives us no so sure token of his fatherhood as in the inflexibility of his moral administration, by which alone are we turned to the right and kept in the right. The penalty that the sinner must pay is the boon of infinite love; the retributions of the world to come are the merciful discipline of him who wills not that any soul should perish, and over the gates of what a harsh theology used to deem the realm of eternal woe stands in letters of living light the inscription, "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?"

In my infancy, in Webster's Spelling-book, the first sentence for children to read, stamped on the child's memory by repeated and prolonged efforts to master it, was, "No man can put off the law of God." I do not believe that the lexicographer, hard, dry old man, as I knew him in after years, had any higher purpose than to frame a sentence of words of not more than three letters; and yet it looks almost like special inspiration that gave for the earliest lesson in printed words to millions of young minds the fundamental truth of moral philosophy, — a truth which every soul of man must learn sooner or later, if not in this world, in the world beyond.

We have no moral need so intense as that the

inflexibleness of God's law have its indelible record, not in our formal belief, but in our inmost hearts. The youth, on the verge of manhood, plainly sees where the two ways part; but he is prone to say to himself, "I may go a step or two in the wrong way without committing myself to it. I may taste the forbidden cup, yet not drink deep. I may learn what pleasurable sin is, and then forsake it." Yet more, are we not all, however blameless in outward life, more or less careless about what are often called little sins (though it were well not to use the word *little* about any sins), are we not careless about what seem slight matters of duty or obligation, in the feeling that they do not affect in the least degree the solid, permanent elements of character? A few years ago temperance lecturers produced a strong impression on their audiences by exhibiting plates representing the action of alcoholic stimulants on the interior tissues of the human organism. I wish that we could have like charts of the anatomy of the inner man, of the morbid working of sin on and in the soul. The youth would see in what he deems his first venial excess a vital organ of his immortal being smitten with a gangrene, slow perhaps, but incurable, and destined to spread till the whole moral nature shall be putrefied; or if the disease be arrested, the injury from which it proceeds not entirely healed,

but scarred over, and liable at any moment to break out afresh with fatal issue. Not only so, but in us who do not class ourselves among the sinners, might there not appear here and there a morbid discoloration, offensive to the eye, and in many cases symptomatic of incipient atrophy, decay, and decline? The minister of the gospel has, indeed, no diagrams to show; but the physiology of mind and soul which it is his province to expound has no less scientific exactness and precision than that material physiology which the scalpel can lay bare, the microscope reveal, and the photographer display.

But leaving the reverse side of the truth under consideration, as we prepare to commemorate him who was tempted as we are without sin, let us contemplate the course and issue of the life in close conformity with the divine law.

It must be remembered at the outset that as conformity with material laws produces material benefits without reference to character, so that obedience to hygienic rules will do as much for the swindler as for the saint, in like manner conformity to the moral law can be depended upon only for results of its own kind. Worldly success depends on a thousand conditions beside character. The story-book theory that goodness always prospers is disproved in real life, and it is well for us that it is

disproved ; for if virtue always prospered, it would cease to be virtue, and men would be perpetually re-enacting the pitiful farce of those who wanted to make Jesus king because they ate of the loaves and were filled. Then, too, the various portions and aspects of the divine law require all the diversities of human condition to make them fully manifest. God needs for the manifold illustration of his perfect law, and man needs for example and encouragement in keeping it, that it show its resplendent beauty and reveal its transcending loveliness alike on the throne and on the cross, in prosperous and in adverse fortunes, in buoyant strength and vigor, and in infirmity, illness, and suffering, with the praise and under the frowns of men, in honor and beneath scorn and contempt. I have never forgotten what was said many years ago by a clerical friend of mine on his death-bed, "My words are few and feeble ; but the pulpit from which I utter them must give them weight and power." Have we not, all of us, witnessed in the patience, resignation, and trust of those most severely afflicted such demonstration as no words could convey of the peace which God gives to those who love and keep his law? Thus the faithful law-keepers have numbered in their ranks equally those for whom the world has done its best, and those who have endured its severest privations and trials.

I would first name health of soul as the certain consequence of conformity to "the law of the Lord." The saying is trite only because it is profoundly true, "Health is the greatest of earthly blessings; for without it what is there earthly that we can enjoy?" Would to heaven that the corresponding maxim as to soul-health were on every one's lips and in every one's heart; for the highest conceivable blessing is soul-health, so that spiritual hygiene ought to be our life-aim and life-work. Hale, healthy, whole, holy, are all from the same root, and express the same quality of the soul, its perfect sanitary condition, its completeness, stainlessness. We may not dare to affirm this of ourselves; and yet I trust that there is that in our experience which can tell us what it means, and what blessedness there is in it. The moments when for duty, for righteousness' sake, in the service of God, and of man as the child of God, we have made strenuous effort or costly sacrifice, have been the great moments of our lives, — they have given us immeasurably more than happiness, — we would have incurred what we call unhappiness in order to secure them. When, too, our lives have flowed on in an even course of faithful duty, with no breaks of supineness, negligence, waywardness, discontent, or unkindness, with no intervals on a lower plane than the table-land on which we can walk at equal

pace with God and with man, it has been for us an experience immeasurably more blessed than we have derived from any fullness of enjoyment beside. Nay, if at such periods there has been disappointment, loss, or grief, the current of a more than earthly joy has flowed on, pure and transparent, through the turbid stream of the lower life, if sometimes beneath, much oftener above, the surface of the troubled waters. If we would only thus live always, though it were under the heaviest pressure of calamity, and with not a ray of hope as to things earthly, there would still be that in our souls which would give a most indignant negative to Satan's question about Job, Does he serve God for naught?

Then, too, I will not say along with, but an essential part of, this blessedness is the consciousness of service, of usefulness, of being fellow-workers with God for the good of man. Without conformity to God's law there is no sure, unmingled, permanent usefulness. But so far as the perfect law is our law, we are all the time doing good in full proportion to our ability, and with an ability constantly increasing, the one talent, if it be but one, becoming two, the two in good time four, and so on, till heaven shall show what our earthly work has been. "Among whom ye shine as lights in the world," says St. Paul to his disciples, and it may be said with equal truth to all who keep and love the per-

fect law of the Lord. To be sure, we cannot all be beacon-lights. But at the least we can be house-lamps, giving light to all in the house with us, shining through the windows, too, so that those who pass by shall want to light their lamps from ours. We do more good by being all that we ought to be than by any kind or amount of active service. The constant effluence of a life in close conformity to the perfect law of God is an unintermittent source of blessing to all within its sphere; and he who lives thus, while he will omit no word or deed by which he can benefit those around him, goes about doing good in all the common affairs, the business, the intercourse of daily life.

Least of all should it be forgotten that the law-abiding life is the life eternal, — the only life which can live on unchanged in death, — unchanged, save that it emerges from the sometimes clouded light of these lower heavens into the full radiance of the perfect day.

The perfectness of this law-keeping life we have in Jesus, and of all the praises which the worship of these nineteen centuries has heaped upon his name, the superlative ground of reverence, love, loyal discipleship, thankful commemoration of him on earth till we fall at his feet in heaven, is that in him alone we have the living law, — the law of the Lord which is perfect, incarnate in a life no less perfect.

As regards earthly reward, if there is any lesson that we can learn from his life, it is that God does not pay his servants in the world's current coin. We see in him a childhood and youth of poverty and toil, a manhood homeless, despised, scorned, persecuted, hunted to death, — a death of ignominy and unspeakable anguish, on the cross between two thieves, while his life-work seemed an utter failure, and there was every reason to suppose that his memory would little more than survive his burial. But while standing on the confines of the world which had shown itself unworthy of him, with that horrible death on the morrow in clearest view, he yet can say, "My peace I give unto you." "My peace," — the most precious legacy that he can leave to those whom his death will make orphans; and neither they nor any of his followers since have doubted that his legacy was the best gift this side of heaven. Indeed, can we read his words at the paschal table, his prayer of intercession, the narrative of his serene endurance and calm triumph on the cross, and not feel that we could even die like and with him, if only our souls could be suffused, penetrated, filled with a peace like his?

Then, too, this perfect life of his was doing its work, and though the world knew it not, he knew it. Though Jew and Gentile conspired to crush out his very name in the lowest infamy, he could

pray in faith for those who in ages to come should believe in him; we in this far-off land and time were not forgotten in his interceding, loving heart, and myriads of ransomed souls in heaven and on earth are but the continuous answer to his prayer. Nor let it ever be forgotten that it is by his perfect law-keeping that he has the name above every name, that he is the leader and guide of all faithful souls, and that his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, his dominion without end.

He, too, in his resurrection demonstrates the continuity of the law-abiding life, shows that virtue, integrity, faithfulness, loving service cannot die; for God's perfect law and they who keep and love it are partakers of his own eternity.

SERMON IX.

CHRIST AND THE POOR. AN ADVENT SERMON.

"The poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always." — JOHN xii. 8.

THESE two facts are as real now as when the words were uttered, and the casual connection which they have in the gospel narrative is permanent in history, and is a prominent feature of what we call, yet hardly have a right to call, Christendom. We have the poor always with us because Jesus is not always with us.

On this first Sunday in Advent, when the Church begins to prepare for the festival of the Nativity, may it not be fitting for us to consider in this one respect what would be the consequence of Christ's really coming among us, not as he came in Bethlehem, a helpless babe, but as he will one day come, in the power of his spirit, King of kings, and Lord of lords, to a renovated world?

The poor we have always with us, and the chief reason is that Christ is not always with us. The greater part of the poor are so because he is not with them. It should not diminish, but only in-

tensify, and at the same time guide, our pity for them to know that a very large proportion of the poor are so in consequence of guilt, their own, or that of those who should be their protectors and care-takers. Even the blameless and saintly among them are oftener than not, in their infirmity or old age, thrown upon the precarious charity of the outside world by the worthlessness of those who should have had them in charge. Unless your attention has been specially directed to this point, as mine has been, you can have no idea of the extent to which intemperance has been the indirect, yet sole cause of the poverty of those who have themselves always led sober and exemplary lives.

Still farther, the compensation of labor of all kinds is in a great degree contingent on the average standard of merit and of self-respect among the laborers. In any class of operatives the larger is the proportion of those whose characters deserve, and whose tastes and habits need, small remuneration, the lower are the wages of the entire class to which they belong.

On the other hand, there is no small amount of poverty chargeable upon the prosperous classes of society, and that because Jesus is not with them. In this city, while there are many employers who are rigidly just, many too who are as generous as they can afford to be, you yet would find not a few

who take advantage of the needs of those in their employ, and pay them at the lowest rate that will ward off absolute starvation, so that there are many apartments in crowded tenement-houses where Hood's "Song of the Shirt" might be sung in strains broken by sobs and tears. Nor is there ever a case of large and bold fraud, whether peculation, embezzlement, or bankruptcy, which does not sweep away some poor men's dues, or reduce to want some who were not poor before.

Remedies for poverty have been proposed from Plato's time till now, and tried on a limited scale, sure, however, if successful, to be reproduced on a large scale. This is not the time or place to discuss them, though I should welcome a fit opportunity of so doing. The verdict which may be passed upon them all was well expressed on the spot by an operative in Robert Owen's establishment at Lanark, "'T is but patching up poor human nature; if it be stopped in one place, it will break out in another." Even the elect souls at Brook Farm complained of one another for the selfishness which, if not the sole mother, is the chief nurse of poverty. Worst of all proposed remedies is what styles itself nationalism, — a plan utterly absurd while every concern that the nation has in charge is at the mercy of party spirit, official corruption, and individual greed, needless when the nation shall be

pure enough not to betray its trusts, and in its ideal perfection presenting a most dreary picture of a world in which social machinery supersedes all offices of individual kindness and helpfulness, and selfishness is neutralized, not by the grace of God, but by the utter dearth of all objects of ambition and endeavor.

When I speak of Christianity as tending to banish poverty, I am far from meaning that it would equalize wealth, — a consummation as undesirable as impossible. Large properties are needed as movement funds and safety funds for industry, which without them would be liable to perpetual and ruinous fluctuation. They are essential, too, for the cultivation of art and taste, and to sustain and furnish those who can serve as pioneers on routes of social progress and elevation which they leave open for all who will follow them. Social equality would mean a low level, and a retrograde movement of the whole body. If Christ were really with us, while the abjectly and miserably poor would be no longer with us, there would still be those capable of large stewardships, who would make their wealth God's treasury, and those of humbler gifts, callings, and position, who would need, but would never lack, the protection, care, assistance, watchful providence of those whose means of doing good would be the only limit of

their felt responsibility. A good God will never leave the world destitute of the opportunity to imitate his own goodness in offices of love for his children. A world where there was no good to be done would be only less wretched than one in which men refused to do good. Heaven would be very undesirable, if those who dwell there have no opportunities of service. The term *angels* (which will undoubtedly include earth-born angels) suggests no blessedness so great as is conveyed in its very meaning, — messengers, agents of God's love; and there is room enough in the universe for the work of as many angels as earth can give to heaven. In a truly Christian state of society there would be wanting the bleak, barren mountain-peaks of selfish wealth, and the equally barren sunless ravines in which poverty-stricken life lies under the dense shadow of death; but society would be like one of our richly diversified New England landscapes of alternate hill and valley, all lying equally under God's sunshine and teeming equally with harvest wealth.

How is this condition of things to be brought about? Not by agitation. Not by socialistic or communistic theories or schemes. Not by tongue-work or pen-work, however specious or eloquent. St. Peter says (and it is a pity that so little heed has been given to his words) that the spiritual temple,

God's true temple, the temple of Christ's indwelling, must be built of living stones, and there is no other way of building it. Collective Christian work can be only the aggregate of individual Christian work. The stones must be made alive one by one, and because they are alive they will build themselves into their proper places; and still more, the life that is in them will pour with an ever increasing momentum into the stones that lie dead around them, till they all grow into a holy temple. Moreover, with the growth, the rate of growth will constantly increase. The dead stones, instead of the attraction of gravitation, which now holds them fast to the earth, will feel more and more the lifting power of cumulative vitality in the living stones. And such a living stone may each of us be, building ourselves into the temple that shall be made ready for our Lord's real and only real advent.

Living with what life? With what other than the life of Christ? It is in Christlike souls alone that Christ can so be here that the poor shall not be here; and there is no other way in which you and I can be of efficient service and no disservice in the relief or prevention of that immense proportion of human want and suffering that has its source in sin. That we may thus be efficient, our Christ-likeness must not be a mere lustrous glazing over of the surface of life; for the glazing is always

in danger of cracking, so that the dark surface which it covers will show through; but it must be the outglow of a Christlike heart. Such a character is a perennial power for righteousness. We all live in glass houses, and in houses with convex glass walls in which, for lookers-in, our faults, at least, are magnified. Meanness, untruthfulness, anything short of transparent honesty and integrity, self-indulgence to the border-line of sobriety, bad temper, peevishness, unreasonable exaction, all these — faults that draw no grave censure on persons holding what is called a respectable social standing — generate poverty-breeding sin and crime in persons employed by us or dependent upon us. The office, the shop, the kitchen, are seminaries of good or bad morals, and thus, to a degree that cannot be overestimated, the procreant cradles of prosperity or of want and of ultimate pauperism. If there are merchants whose clerks in after-life always reflect credit upon them, it is not because their clerks are better than other young men at the outset, but because they imbibe sentiments of rectitude and honor from their employers; while who can say how many of those who have incurred shame and ruin learned their first lessons in depravity from notions and practices, loose and of doubtful right, yet not criminal or disgraceful, in which they were trained on their entrance upon a

business life? In the family, too, it can hardly be but that the faults of employers are often the causes of the sins of those who serve them, and far oftener than is imagined must it lie at the disposal of the heads or the adult members of a household, whether those who go from its service to homes of their own shall make those homes thrifty and well-ordered, or nurseries of such habits as must issue in want and misery. In view of our responsibility for those thus in various ways necessarily under our shaping and guiding influence, we may well borrow our Saviour's words, "For their sakes I sanctify myself."

We need also to be Christlike in our outlook on society, and especially on the least virtuous portion of it. Hopefulness was an essential element in Christ's saving power, and it is so in that of his Church. There may be exceptions, but fewer than is commonly believed, to the truth that, for good or evil, men tend to be what they are expected to be. The officers of the Concord Reformatory told me a few weeks ago that of the seemingly reformed men under their charge, there is hardly ever an instance of the relapse into vice or crime of one who has been kindly treated, while those who are treated as criminals still are always liable to become criminals again. By our hopefulness for those whose wrong-doing of any kind falls under

our immediate cognizance, by regarding their penitence and good resolutions as genuine, by ignoring a worse past so long as there is promise of a better future, by acting in the spirit of our Saviour's words, "Go, and sin no more," we may save souls from death, and lives from ruin. Instances are not wanting in which hopeful clemency has redeemed, for a prosperous and useful career, one who else would have been among the refuse of the community. Not only are we saved by hope; but by hope we may save those who else were lost.

I come now to what is commonly called charity, though in character, influence, and hope we have the better part of charity, — that which energizes, guides, and hallows all the rest.

I am glad to know that there are many of you who are treating the problem of pauperism in the only Christian and efficient way, by giving yourselves, with heart and soul, with mind and strength, to the various forms of Christian work which the needs of those around you are constantly demanding. Among these forms supreme stress should always be laid on those that have a bearing on character, on the aid and encouragement of industry, on industrial education, on the forming of habits of self-respect and independence, on all that raises the tone of moral sentiment, on the indirect, often the wisest, as well as the direct, means of reli-

gious influence. Your meeting last Wednesday, to organize your industrial work for the winter, was as truly an advent service as that which we are holding now, and your employment-room receives the consecration of a temple of worship from the thoughtful kindness with which you ward off penury and bestow with relief the redeeming consciousness of earning it. Most efficient of all services is the virtuous and religious training of orphaned and imperiled children. Pauperism is hereditary. There are families that have handed down the brand and curse for two centuries and more. Genealogists no longer confine themselves to the lines of transmitted genius and excellence; but pains have been taken to disinter the pedigree of want, shame, and sin. I have in distinct memory three such ancestral records, with minute details of personal history, — cases in which of many scores of the progeny of a single pauper pair not one in twenty had risen to the lowest level of decent life, not a single one above it, and all the residue had been burdens upon public charity when not in prison. By your Sunday-schools, your asylums, your industrial training, you know not how many of these baleful entails you may dock, how many lines of worthy heredity may date from your ministry. You would be surprised at some names, not unfamiliar to you, of men in prominent

positions in this city, in this State, and in the nation, who have owed all that they are, and all that their posterity will be, to the Christian benevolence that rescued them in early childhood from surrounding and contagious evil; and I am glad to remember of some such men, that they never forgot "the rock whence they were hewn and the hole of the pit whence they were digged," and delighted to render to children exposed as they had been such mercy as had been their own salvation.

Meanwhile, in the relief of bodily wants which press upon your charity on the approach of winter, you will not forget that Christ incarnated, and that the Christlike must incarnate too, the precept of the old prophet, "that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh." He touched the lepers that he healed, laid his hands on the eyes to which he gave sight. The gift may feed or clothe the body; the gift with the giver will nourish, strengthen, and gladden the soul. Human influence, mind on mind, heart on heart, is the truest charity. On this ground I have felt greatly interested in the ministry to the sick poor which you have largely aided in inaugurating, — the sending to them nurses who can teach them how to become nurses themselves, and can carry with them much of the aroma of the Christian love which starts them on their mission.

I have had time merely to touch on topics on

which I would gladly say more. I have endeavored to point out the way in which we may best prepare for the real advent of him without whose coming the poor must still be here. By a life conformed to his loving spirit, we may each of us create around himself or herself an advent circle in which he will be with us and with those whom we help and bless in his name. These circles will multiply till at length they run together, and the cry shall go up from the renovated world, "The Lord has come."

SERMON X.

CHURCH-BUILDING.

"Ye, as living stones, are built up a spiritual temple."— 1 Peter ii. 5.

When I preached here on Advent Sunday, I quoted this text, and I now ask you to look a little more fully into its meaning. The figure of house-building is a very favorite one with the Apostles, especially with St. Paul. You remember where he speaks of the different sorts of materials with which men build on Jesus Christ, the one foundation. Beside, he also uses the term *edify* and its derivatives no less than twenty-one times; and edifying, as many of you know, means house-building, as does the Greek word which it represents. Thus when we speak of the building up of character or of the building up of a church, we use language that has the highest apostolic sanction. But we differ from St. Paul in one important particular. Do you suppose that he would ever have thought of character-building and church-building as two separate or separable concerns? That he would for a moment have thought of the latter as possible

without the former? of a church not built of living stones? Yet the two are separate in our common use of the terms.

We speak familiarly of the building up of a church. Suppose we should inquire into the modes employed, especially in communities where there is a struggle for existence among rival churches, and each hopes to avail itself of the law of the survival of the fittest. The building up is sometimes attempted by an attractive musical service; sometimes by dancing and theatricals; and I was once shown a cooking range and a well stocked china-closet as the means of grace by which that particular church was going to get the advantage of all the others, to which I wanted to rejoin, "What! Have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God?" Sometimes the instrument employed in building is a minister who will draw, not one who will instruct or impress his own congregation in a godly wise, but one who shall win outsiders by his eloquence or oratory. The aim is sometimes specially denominational; but in the attempt to build up a sect, I do not find that the endeavor is to show in the structure more genuinely living stones, but simply to get stones together of whatever quality; and a stone that was of no worth where it belonged before, is accepted as a godsend when it can be filched from the wall

of a neighboring church. These methods are often successful in their way, — how successful, at the best, I think, may be learned from what a minister not long ago said to me, "We have now in our church everything that can be desired except the pervading interest which I long to see in religion as a personal concern."

With many of these methods we indeed have nothing to do. Yet the building up of itself collectively as a church is a necessity imposed by Providence on every church, however prosperous; for death and change are perpetually creating voids that crave to be filled. Let us consider, then, this matter of church-building. What is the object of it? You would answer, of course, The honor, interest, and growth of the Christian religion. But what is the Christian religion good for? I think that you would acquiesce in my answer, — To build up Christlike characters; to make Christlike men and women. Does it serve any other purpose? You may answer, It has, beside, an important mission in shaping human society. This I grant, if you will omit the *beside*. I do not believe that it is of any worth in shaping society except through the Christlike men and women that it makes. Suppose Christianity a universal religion in form and profession, and there were yet no creation of Christlike men and women, do you think that the

world would be any the better for the change? All Europe, except its southeastern corner, calls itself Christian. Think of the many millions of men debarred from home-life and productive industry that they may be in readiness at briefest warning to slay their fellow-Christians, as by a strange irony they call them, — of the myriads so low in the social scale that the first step of ascent is higher than their strained vision can reach, — of the myriads so born and nurtured in sin that they know no difference between right and wrong, — of the thousands from whose high position and large ability there never goes forth a generous deed or thought. In this waste you will see here and there a sunny spot made luminous by some really Christlike person, a pastor in a mountain village, a man of eloquent lips and more eloquent life in a great metropolis, a Bible-reader in London slums, a Sister of Mercy in the malarial dens of Naples, a man of large wealth and broad influence who measures his responsibility by his opportunities and means. In this country it is only the multiplication of such luminous spots that can arrest the tendency in Western to become like Eastern Christendom. Here you have on the map of the two continents, exhibited on a large scale, the two sorts of materials that can be employed in church-building; and the error of the builders of our individual churches

is that they are very indifferent in their choice of materials, as ready to use earth-encrusted stones as living stones.

But how are we to get the living stones? I would, first of all, say, Be yourselves such stones, and thus, for thus you best can, multiply them. In the building up of a church too much stress is laid on the minister's part. My own professional self-respect would prevent me from undervaluing the minister's work, and least of all could I do it in this presence, with the blessed memories of as loyal and efficient service as wise master-builders ever rendered. But the more there is in the minister, the more does he see and feel the need of the right living stone always in its right place in the temple. They who should be, and perhaps mean to be, his chief helpers are often his chief hindrances, if there are in them glaring faults or deficiencies, though coupled with resplendent excellencies, or if, themselves blameless, they lack the spirit of propagandism, and are content with such driblets of the water of life as they can catch in their own little gill-cups, instead of opening the flood-gates of the spring and proclaiming, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Living stones we should be, permeated with the life of Christ. To this end, we need to be intimately conversant with him. I do not mean, to

read or to know all about him, but to feel him as of our near kindred. There is no intimate type of goodness that has not its personal element. Our home virtues in their purity and fullness grow from our home loves; our social virtues, from our felt relations with those in the smaller and the larger circle; our heart-charities, from our fellow-feeling with their objects. But for the whole sisterhood of virtues there is no inspiration like that of getting near the heart of Jesus, breathing in the loveliness and beauty of his spirit, tracing its outflow in his walk among men. As we muse over his prayers, we learn to pray with him. As we contemplate his resignation and submission, we find it in our hearts to say, Father, thy will be done. As we meditate on his life of loving service, we come to feel the blessedness of service, and to know that the only true life is that of going about doing good. To be living stones in the temple, we must make his life ours, in the sense in which St. Paul says, "To me to live is Christ."

Then comes, if I may so speak, the translating of his life into ours; for the true following of him is not imitation, but translation. There are a thousand things which he did which we cannot do, perhaps ought not to do. There are a thousand things for us to do which were out of the question for him, with his surroundings. It is objected by some to

Christ's life and teachings as a directory in conduct, that they are not adapted to our time. My only answer is, If they were, they would not be adapted to all time. On the ground on which this objection is raised there ought to be a fresh moral code and an exemplar of it for every age and community. Were you to write out in detail the moral law in its application to all conditions and cases here and now, you would have, not a volume, but a library, and a century hence almost the whole of it would need to be written over again, then, as now, to very little purpose. I think that if I had a volume of detailed rules for my daily conduct, I should often be at a loss for the right chapter and section. But I do not believe that there ever has been or will be or can be an occasion, when if you or I were acquainted with Christ, as we can be if we will, we could not answer without a moment's hesitation the question, What would Jesus be or think, say or do, under like circumstances? Now it is those who will ask and answer this question, and abide by the answer, that are the flawless living stones in the spiritual temple.

This is indeed a high standard, and my own self-consciousness would make me slow to speak otherwise than lovingly and hopefully of those who are conscious of falling short of it, yet aim to reach it. But if they love the Church of God, it may be for

them an added motive to circumspection and diligent self-culture, that with every accession of spiritual life in their own souls they are adding just so much to the strength and beauty of the walls of their Zion.

But in the living stones of the spiritual temple there must be more than blamelessness of life and character. The Church, so long as there is a world outside of it, lives not for itself alone, but for the redemption of mankind, — the army of the living God, with "Freely ye have received; freely give," for the motto on its standard. It is not enough that the individual church makes its annual contribution to some public treasury. The actual doing of good is an essential part of the Christlike character, and is equally a most essential means of its growth. I am reminded of a wise saying of Judge White, whom many of you knew. When the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions asked to be incorporated, the measure was opposed in the Massachusetts legislature on the ground that there was so little of religion among us that we could not afford to give any of it away. Judge White, who was then in the Senate, rejoined, "Religion is one of those commodities, of which the more we export, the more we have at home." So it proved. Not the mere money-giving, but the inquiry into the needs of heathendom, and the humane sympathies

thus called forth, roused the (so-called) orthodox churches of New England from a lethargy, nay, from what seemed a death slumber in which they had lain for more than half a century. The result is precisely the same in any individual church which gives, not money merely, but earnest and faithful work. It receives much more than it gives. It best builds itself up when it is building up any enterprise in behalf of ignorant, needy, suffering humanity outside of itself; and this enhanced spiritual life of the church is the aggregate of the increased spiritual vitality of its individual members, every one of whom is enriched by gift, effort, or sacrifice, receiving, not interest upon his investment in Christian work, but much more than its entire principal in the fuller inflow of the spirit of the Divine Master into his own soul.

Suppose an individual church thus built entirely or chiefly of living stones, the one pervading aim and spirit of those who have its interests at heart being the growth of Christ-likeness in themselves and in the surrounding world. What would be the result?

The least that we can say is that such a church would more than keep itself in repair. It would suffer depletion only at the hands of Providence, and the life that thus necessarily passed from it to heaven or to other earthly abodes would be more

than replaced by the new life within its own pale. None would willingly leave such a church. If the young people trained within its walls saw that it was really the house of God and the gate of heaven to their elders, they would be slow to seek health for their souls elsewhere. Where there was the constant stress of religious influence of the purest and highest type, they would want no other spiritual home. The disease of the "itching ear," the craving for excitement, the longing for "fresh woods and pastures new," would no longer infect the worshipers; for there can be no doubt that with the seeming levity and frivolity with which some persons, especially young people, flit from church to church, is often blended a latent feeling that under the special ministration which they are tempted to forsake they can see but faint traces of the spiritual life that ought to be. The worst of the case is that in none of our churches, so far as I know, is there the supreme stress that ought to be laid on living stones in church-building, so that too often those who change their church-belongings, in the language of the old hymn, "shift the place, yet keep the pain."

Still farther, such a church as I have supposed would hold no second place among the moral forces of its time and land. However obscure its geographical site, spiritually it would stand as on a

mountain summit, and all eyes would be turned toward it. It would shed gladdening and guiding rays near and far. It would furnish a type of church-building which would be eagerly copied, and would multiply its own likeness, till, so far from continuing exceptional, it would tend, slowly it may be, but inevitably, to render any other type exceptional. It would silence caviling, and turn skepticism into faith. It would furnish precisely the antidote for infidelity which alone can be efficient in these fast days of ours. The time was, and not long ago, when men who doubted the divineness of Christianity and its Founder could be persuaded to study its evidences, and to make themselves masters of its contents, so as to determine its claims by its intrinsic merits and its place in the world's history. This whole mass of evidence remains, stable, impregnable, adequate. But in the rush of novelty, and the rapidity with which the newest things are growing obsolete, the only evidence which can gain men's attention, reach their minds, touch their hearts, win them to the love and service of Christ, is that which they can see and hear and know in Christianity as incarnate in its professed disciples. While we thank God for the gospel as our charter of the life eternal, let us never forget that with his unspeakable gift comes to us a corresponding responsibility for showing to those around us that it has not been bestowed upon us in vain.

SERMON XI.

GOD IN CHRIST.

"The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." — Acts xiv. 11.

So said the people of Lystra, and they gave voice to the belief in the incarnation of the Divine, which has borne a large part in all the ethnical religions. This belief has its converse in the apotheosis of the human, to such a degree that the pantheon of the old world, of Greece especially, has more names than we can number of men pre-eminent for rank, or heroism, or bold adventure. These twin beliefs rest on the essential interdependence of man's conception of the human and of the Divine. Humanity is the only material from which divinity can be framed or imagined. Man of necessity makes God or gods after his own image or that of his kind. Human attributes are the only attributes that man knows or can conceive of. The Supreme Being may have attributes entirely extra-human in kind as well as in degree; but if so, man cannot know them, nay, not even by revelation; for the language of the revelation

would be to him as an unknown tongue. In order to comprehend these non-human traits of the Divine nature, he must become a partaker of them; and it is certainly not improbable that in a higher state of being we may learn more of God than we can now know by deriving from him powers and properties of mind and soul, which are now his, but not ours. On the other hand, it is conceivable that the Divine Being may seem to us possessed of different and separable attributes simply because our imperfect vision decomposes the radiance from the sapphire throne, as the prism breaks into rays of varied hue the pure white light of the sun. It may be that John beheld in a moment of special illumination the glory of the Most High, and told what he saw, when he said, "God is love," and that what we call infinite power and wisdom, perfect holiness, justice, and goodness, are but the outrayings and outgoings of eternal love. Yet we who have not had the open vision are constrained to make our thought of God complex as is our own self-consciousness, and thus to give their respective places to the several infinities and perfections which we term Divine attributes.

Gods in the likeness of men have always been believed in. Even fetichism and the lowest forms of idolatry ascribe human traits to the objects of worship, often coarse lusts and appetites, always

such forms of truculence and vindictive wrath as are prevalent among the worshipers. The Greeks, whose poetic and æsthetic culture is the wonder and glory of the ages, were not a virtuous or a virtue-loving people, and their mythology, incomparably beautiful in its kind, is utterly lacking in the beauty of holiness, because there was none of it in the typical men and women after whose likeness their gods were shaped. Rome in her earlier days had a purer morality, and therefore her gods were more decent than the corresponding deities of Greece. But her gods were genuine Romans. In studying the character of the elder Cato, who in his time was regarded as a man of unsurpassed excellence, I was moved to open my New Testament at the Beatitudes, and while Cato possessed almost every virtue not specially blessed by Christ, I found that there was not one of the Beatitudes in which he, the best of the Romans, could have claimed a part; and there are none of the Roman divinities who possessed any one of these virtues.

The Hebrews had a higher conception of God than any other pre-Christian people, and my belief is that they had a larger measure of Divine inspiration than the rest of the ancient world. But their greatest and best men often manifested a fierce integrity, a merciless righteousness, a vindictive patriotism. The Hebrews had before them the

image of Moses killing the Egyptian and hiding him in the sand, of Samuel hewing Agag in pieces, of Elisha cursing the rude boys that laughed at his bald head, and, though not without some prophetic gleams of a loftier faith, their current representations of Jehovah had the same limitations that were to be found in their heroes and saints. The peculiarly evangelical traits of character were held in very low esteem among them. They had not even respectable names for them; and the evangelists had to pick up names for what we deem cardinal virtues from the rubbish and dust-heaps of language, and to baptize them for Christian use. The majesty of a lowly spirit, the greatness of humility, the magnanimity of forbearance, the nobleness of service, were not recognized till the coming of him who reversed the moral scale, and gave supremacy to qualities which before were, like himself, "despised and rejected of men."

Therefore was it that men's highest conceptions of God lacked those traits which are emphatically denoted when Christ says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In perfect humanity alone could man see God. But where has perfect humanity been beheld save in Christ? Good men there have been, indeed, all along the ages, — Christlike men, rarely before him, often since his time and under his training; and it has been our

great joy to know such men. But there is a difference. The best men in history and in our own time have been conspicuous for single virtues, and in others, while not deficient, not resplendent. They have had their weak sides, — aspects in which, while we could not censure, we could not admire them. They have had, too, their limitations of nation, condition, culture, sect, and age; and have won the special reverence of only a part of the lovers of goodness. They have become obsolete with the lapse of time; and while we recall with loving memory the saints of the earlier ages, we feel that somehow they are outgrown; for we can see them only in their surroundings, and those surroundings so cleave to them as to obscure in some measure the lustre of their lives. There are not a few persons well worthy of their place on the list of all saints, whom we could not now propose as examples to ourselves or others, without large exceptions and abatements.

Christ alone takes nothing from his surroundings. They show him; but they do not veil him. He is in full activity, in close relation with the life of his time, and yet he does not become identified with it. He is no more a Hebrew than if he had been born in Arabia; but kindred spirits of every people and tongue equally feel that he is their fellow-citizen. The highest culture does not make

him seem less, and none have been more ready than the wisest and the greatest among men to render to him the most lowly homage. He, alone of all luminaries in the spiritual firmament, has no secular parallax, but holds the same zenith altitude in our century of boastful science and progress too rapid to be registered as when the Galilean fishermen were his satellites and friends. Nor do we get tired of his record, or find it exhausted by our life-long familiarity with it. On the other hand, he who has made it his daily companion for three or four score years reads it only with profounder interest, and is perpetually discovering in the character which it portrays more delicate lines and richer tints of spiritual beauty and loveliness. Thus the narrative of this peerless life, alone of all biographies, is like the great works of nature, like the flowers, and the stars, and the glowing sunsets, and the sparkling waters, which we cannot behold with satiety, but which grow upon us with our years, and are the more full of sweetness and of glory for us the longer we live.

In fine, we have in Jesus Divine humanity, God manifest in the flesh, God in Christ, all of God that can be incarnate, all of God that we can fully comprehend. We employ with reference to the Divine attributes the two terms *infinite* and *perfect*, — the former as applied to God's power and know-

ledge, the latter to his moral attributes. Infinity cannot be duplicated. It can be incarnate only in part. Christ could not be omnipotent, — else there were two Gods; and he expressly says, "I can of mine own self do nothing." He could not be omniscient, — else there were two Gods; and you remember that he disclaims the knowledge even of the time when his own predictions would be fulfilled, and there can be no doubt that, like any other son of man, he grew in wisdom, as the evangelist says, and that there still remained room for further growth. But moral perfection can be fully incarnate. It may be duplicated, multiplied. It is conceivable that a being not infinite may be perfect, — may be endowed with immaculate purity and holiness, with justice or righteousness incapable of the slightest deflection from the absolute and everlasting right, and with a love embracing all beings, and ready to do or to suffer to the utmost for all whom it can thus benefit, — to coin its entire selfhood into service and sacrifice. This conception is realized in Christ, and in him alone.

But it must be distinctly understood that Christ could not represent God to man, except as a man. There used to be a great deal of controversy about what was called the rank of Christ, springing from the vulgar notion that birth, place, and title are greater than goodness, and can make divineness

more divine. Now if Christ was so raised above human trials and temptations that he could not feel them, so that his goodness was merely automatic, he does not represent God. We cannot think of God as controlled by a necessity beyond his own choice, but only as freely willing, and willing with all the intensity of his infinite being that which is holy, just, and good; and were we to believe the right to be of a necessity outside of his own being, and not of his own choice and will, while we might fear him, we should no longer adore him. Christ is perfect and divine, not because he could not, but because he would not, sin. He might have spurned, but he always welcomed, the incomings of the Divine Spirit, and therefore it was that the Spirit took up its abode in him, and he became one with God. The narrative of the temptation, doubtless his own symbolical sketch of his own experience, denotes an actual measuring of strength with the powers of evil, and their entire defeat and subjugation. Then as to pain, privation, and grief, his whole demeanor is not that of one whom none of these things move, but of one who feels them as we feel them, yet who will not succumb to them, or falter on the line of duty, or incur one pang the less if thereby one iota of his work is to remain unfinished.

Christ, while he represents the God whose na-

ture is ineffably pure, righteous, and loving, in no sense so conspicuously bears the image of God, and so closely meets man's need as a creature of God who would fain know that he is his child, as in suffering and dying. Love has no language so intense, so penetrating, as that of sacrifice, and God speaks to man in the language of sacrifice in the suffering, dying Christ. He was in Christ on the cross, and it is his voice that ever resounds from Calvary, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." It is in Christ that the Divine Shepherd makes search in forest and on mountain to bring back the lost sheep to the fold. It is in Christ that the Father goes forth to meet his penitent son, and makes the whole house ring with joy on his return.

Let us look for a moment at this parable of the lost son as illustrating the thoroughly Christlike view which Christ always gives of his and our Father, God. The father in the parable does not ask whether it is right to forgive, whether justice must not somehow be satisfied, whether, if he takes the younger son home, he ought not to inflict the due penalty on the elder son, who has never at any time transgressed his commandments. He evidently regards forgiveness as simply the repentant sinner's due, even as St. John, who most of all the disciples had an inside knowledge of divine things,

wrote, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Still stronger, if possible, is the other parable of the one lost sheep which the Divine Shepherd, that is, the Eternal Father, ceases not to follow with his loving quest till he is brought home to the fold. Now if Christ had uttered these parables about himself, they would certainly have been true of him, living and dying. He whelmed with his forgiving love the penitent who wept at his feet. He gave his life for his flock. In the free, unpurchased mercy of his self-sacrificing life and his precious blood-shedding, he says, "In me behold your God and Father. See how he loves. Know that the penitent ever finds refuge in his house and his everlasting arms. Believe that in the fullness of time the last straying from his fatherly love shall be brought home."

The God in Christ, then, is not the stern lawgiver, the relentless judge, the pitiless autocrat, unmoved by the needs and griefs of humanity. He feels for man. The infinite soul throbs for him with profound emotion, with ineffable pity for his misdoing and ill-being, with a fuller pulse of gladness than can flow in any finite soul when the lost son is found, when he who was dead in sin is made alive again.

The incarnation is the atonement, — the at-one-ment, not the reconciling of God to man, but God

in Christ reconciling man unto himself. Christ in his divineness is perfect humanity. He shows man what he may progressively become, —how he too may be a partaker of the divine nature. He manifests in his own person the possibilities of human nature. He takes up, as it were, collective humanity into his own bosom, and pours upon its bruised and sin-stricken body the healing balsam of God's forgiving and strengthening spirit. God, in dwelling in Christ, dwells in man, and becomes incarnate, in the measure of their several receptivities, in all the souls that are born anew, the progeny of the second Adam. This is what Christ means when he says, "The glory which thou hast given me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

In this atoning ministry Christ verifies his own words, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," and had he not for so many centuries been placed by the popular theology in contrast, and even in antagonism to the Father, I think that every reader of the sacred record would feel that they were one. Were Jesus, precisely as the evangelists describe him, walking among us as he walked in Judæa, should we not own his as a fatherly presence? Should we not be willing to trust his care and love for eternity? Should we not come

to him with our needs and our griefs for counsel and comfort, and bring our children for his blessing, and welcome him to our tables? Even under the consciousness of sin, I am sure that, were we penitent, we should resort to him as readily as the little child after a fit of waywardness buries himself in his mother's embrace, and can conceive of peace nowhere else. Do you not see how the really needy people, the suffering, afflicted, bereaved, forsaken, despised, regarded him as the divine fatherhood incarnate, pressing through the crowd to touch the hem of his garment, letting down the paralytic through the broken roof that the Lord's hand may be laid upon him, missing his presence more than all things else when death enters the house, while he blends his tears with theirs, bears their griefs as his own, makes his cross the altar of mercy, alike for kindred and strangers, for mourning friends and misguided enemies? In all this it is God in Christ, the Father in the Son, and we begin to know God only when he is to us, if I may so speak, an infinite, omnipresent, omniscient, almighty Christ. Take precisely the traits of character which you behold in Christ, and which you recognize in him as absolutely perfect, and be persuaded that it is in those very traits that God presents himself for your trust, reverence, love, and that he sent Jesus into this world to show you and

all men what manner of being it is that sits on the throne of the universe.

Do you ask how it is that God and Christ have to so large an extent been regarded as at opposite poles of the spiritual universe, — the Father as the impersonation of inflexible justice and almost implacable wrath, and Christ as interposing to satisfy God's justice and appease his wrath? I think that it is in great part due to the habit, in the earlier, yet not the earliest Christian time, of looking at the Old Testament as not only holy scriptures and records of revelation (which I believe it to be), but also as of equal authority with the Gospels, and not as presenting a rudimentary and imperfect theology which was superseded by God in Christ. The Old Testament contains such notions of God as were inevitable, before the Word became flesh and men beheld the genuine glory of God, "full of grace and truth." The habit of Protestant theologians, in Great Britain and America at least, has been to derive their ideas of God from the most gloomy and terrific representations of the Hebrew Scriptures, and while they called him Father, to divest him of all fatherly attributes, ascribing to Christ alone the character in which he always professes to speak the words and to do the works of the Father.

My objection to the dogma of the Trinity, as it

has been generally held, is not that it makes too much of Christ; for he is to me divine, and I know not what can be more than divine; but that it makes the Father and the Son two instead of one. However, in New England at least, this type of theology is fast disappearing; the old technical terms are interpreted with an entirely new meaning; the incarnation is becoming the central belief among enlightened Christians, and I cannot but trust that it will be so recognized that all who own it will deem themselves of one mind and one heart as disciples of Christ. The incarnation — God in Christ — hence our knowledge of God; hence, too, our knowledge of our own nature in its capacities and its destiny; hence the reconciling power and love which shall yet draw all men heavenward; hence the assurance of forgiveness to the penitent, of union with God for all who love and serve him, of eternal life with him whose words are, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

My friends, on our lifeway be God in Christ our pattern and our goal. As we take Christ into our hearts and reproduce him in our lives, let us never forget that we are thus "followers of God as dear children," and may we realize on earth the beginnings and growth of that oneness with Christ and God which shall be complete and eternal in heaven.

SERMON XII.

NEHEMIAH.

"I consulted with myself." — NEH. v. 7.

"I CONSULTED with myself,"— the best counselor that he could have had this side of heaven.

Between Moses and Christ, Nehemiah is by far the greatest personage in Hebrew history. He has gained favor with Artaxerxes as his cup-bearer; but amidst the luxury of an oriental court still mourning for the desolation, and praying for the peace, of Jerusalem, he asks and obtains leave to rebuild the walls and gates of the holy city. Before opening his mission to the depressed remnant of his nation, he surveys the work in the secrecy of three successive nights, and then so apportions it among the people that each of the principal men shall take charge of the repairs over against his own premises, so as to contribute to his safety, comfort, pleasure, and wealth by having a well-built wall instead of ruins and rubbish about his grounds and beneath his windows. Under Nehemiah's supervision the walls rise like those of Thebes to the strains of Amphion's lyre, so that while his bitter

enemies, the Samaritan magistrates, are laying their plans to prevent the commencement of his undertaking, they learn to their dismay that the work is done.

But he finds internal grievances and abuses that present still greater difficulties. The few rich men have oppressed the poor, have exacted usury from them against the law, and have got possession of their property by modes that will not bear investigation. Instead of temporizing and compromising Nehemiah convenes the earliest indignation meeting of which we have record. He "sets a great assembly against" the extortioners, and the majesty of public opinion constrains them to disgorge their plunder. He is threatened, meanwhile, with assassination, and is urged to shut himself up in the temple; but he says indignantly: "Should such a man as I flee? Or who is there that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in."

He finds the Sabbath shamelessly desecrated. The people of the surrounding country have got into the habit of bringing in wine, grapes, and figs for sale on the Sabbath, and there are men of Tyre that "bring in fish and all manner of ware." Nehemiah quietly orders the gates to be shut at eventide before the Sabbath, and not to be opened till the holy time has passed. The hucksters lodge

outside of the gates once or twice, and then being informed that if they come again they will be apprehended and suitably dealt with, they come no more.

Not only the common people, but some of the priests have contracted marriages with idolaters and aliens, and thus have been drawn into associations sure to pervert their religious faith, and to make their children, if not themselves, worshipers of the vile and sanguinary divinities of the Canaanitish races. "And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language." Nehemiah arrests the farther progress of this evil, and deposes the priests and Levites involved in it, among them the son and expectant successor of the high priest, who is the son-in-law of his most resolute and powerful Samaritan antagonist.

These and other reforms he effects with amazing celerity, and enlists the great mass of the people in favor of them, not by intrigue, but by the most open, direct, decisive modes of action. The entire political history of mankind hardly presents another instance of so much accomplished in so short a time by the plastic energy of one man, exerted, not on passive, but on discordant and stubborn materials.

My text gives, as I think, the secret of his marvelous success, — of the thoroughness and faithful-

ness of his work. "I consulted with myself," with no one else. Mark, — the narrative does not exclude, but throughout implies his seeking wisdom from on high. He is devoutly mindful of the Divine presence, and at every stage of his work implores the Divine blessing; and he could not have truly consulted with himself, had he not borne it sacredly in mind that his selfhood was God's of right, and that man without God is less or other than his own proper self. Indeed, it is in accordance with the sound philosophy of human nature that the prodigal in our Lord's parable, as soon as he comes to himself, says, "I will arise and go to my father." Had he not said this in his heart, he would not have come to himself.

But to what purpose is this old Hebrew story for us who have no walls to build, or public wrongs to right, or cities to govern? I answer that we all have a life-work as truly ours as the restoration of Jerusalem was his, and that we can be sure of doing that work wisely and faithfully only by consulting with ourselves at every stage of it. There never was a time when this example was needed as it is now. It is matter of frequent observation that the modern facilities of intercourse are extinguishing eccentricities, moulding communities, men, and women into a degree of similitude not dreamed of half a century ago, and producing an approxi-

mate uniformity of manners and fashions, of modes of speech and conduct, and at many points of opinion also. Early in this century you could find in a single little town more odd, strange, unclassed persons than now exist in one of our most populous counties. To a certain extent this is to be rejoiced in. It is well to have the number of persons who cannot bear their fit and full part in the life and interests of society diminished. But, at the same time, is there not a crushing out of individuality? Are men's souls their own as fully as they used to be? Are there not fewer than formerly who consult with themselves? Has not conformity with established rule or average custom passed from graceful, measured, and contingent compliance into absolute submission to social tyranny? To take a single specification, is not comfort, and consequently health, often knowingly sacrificed to fashion? If there be a fashion, in itself unnatural and ungraceful, that has high authority in its favor, are there not multitudes who adopt it, though it be nothing less than chronic torture, and though it be a well-known cause of multiplying the number of those who lack strength for the duties, though not for the vanities of life? Then there are very many persons of limited incomes who feel compelled to live in the style of persons of their own standing and of twice their

income, and who sacrifice to this imagined necessity much that is really essential to their domestic well-being, keep themselves always poor, doom their families to a heritage of want and dependence, and often defraud their creditors of their rightful dues. Practices on the outside borders of morality are adopted under like influence by many who disapprove of them. There is in many houses a much freer use of strong drink than the consciences of the householders regard as right and safe: and while I am thankful that gambling has not yet become fashionable in general society, there are quarters, and classes of persons, especially of young men, in which some at least gamble with a clear consciousness of wrong-doing, because they dare not to refuse. As regards outward religious observances, many, I am inclined to think, ask, not, What is fitting? What is right? but simply, What is, or is becoming, the prevailing custom? and were there a disposition on the part of leaders in various circles of society to do with Sunday what has been done with so many once holy days, to make it a holiday and nothing else, the fashion would be followed by thousands who would think it very wrong.

The extent and the suppleness of this social conformity show that it cannot be a mere external phenomenon. They indicate souls that do not take counsel of themselves, — souls that do not belong

to the men and women who profess to own them, — souls that are nothing better than public property. On those who have formed, or are tending toward, this parasitic way of living, on those who borrow consciences of their neighbors, and still more emphatically on those who have characters yet to form, I would urge the illustrious example of my text, and would earnestly beg them always to consult with themselves.

Consult with yourself, my friend. No other human being can know precisely what your duty is. We know, negatively, that you ought not to violate the fundamental laws of purity, integrity, and truth, and positively, that you are bound, in general, to be placable, kind, and helpful. But there are details of your duty which we cannot know. I may be your most intimate friend, and, in the common phrase, may know all about you. Yet, even in what is called your outward life, there is more that I do not know than there is that I know. There are claims upon you of which you make no show. There are peculiarities in your relations to kindred and friends, to those dependent upon you, to those on whom you depend, which you feel, but cannot well explain. There are expectations of you, just or unjust, which you know as I cannot. I may be wiser than you, and were I in your place, I might fill it better than you can; but not being in your

place, I cannot fill it so well as you can; and if you take my advice instead of consulting with yourself, you will be unwise, and may be led to act unwisely.

Still more, you have traits of mind and soul, of which you ought to be conscious, but of which no one else can be fully cognizant. You may have proclivities or liabilities in some dangerous direction, which render what would be innocent for others harmful for you. You may need safeguards which others do not need. Your soul may thrive on nourishment which for your neighbor has more bran than wheat. As surely as your constitution of mind, native or inherited, differs from that of those around you, so surely do you need for restraint, guidance, and growth, a moral and religious self-discipline in some respects different from theirs. You have a soul, your own by God's gift, which you are bound to keep intact from evil, and to nourish in all that is Christlike and Godlike. To this end self-knowledge alone can furnish in full the appropriate means. To be sure, there are some essential means, such as prayer and self-communion, as to which there can be no question. But the ordering of the details of your life, both outward and inward, so that you shall always seek and pursue what is good for your soul, and shun what is harmful for your inward well-being, even though

for others it be harmless, is your charge, and no counsel but your own can be safely followed.

Consult with yourselves, but with your whole selves. You, my friend, do not contain your entire selfhood in what you call your own person. The apostle announces no new Christian principle, but a fundamental law of nature, when he says, "We are members one of another." There are lives, souls, bound most intimately with yours, — so truly a part of your being that you would lead a maimed life were they taken from you. There is a smaller, a larger circle, which your example, character, influence permeates, how far you may not know, but can hardly err by an overestimate. There are those to whom you have from God a mission of love and charity. There are public interests, in which your part is your imperative duty. Consult, then, with yourself in such a way that you may do for others, for the few, the many, the city, the state, the nation, all the good within your power, so that to the full measure of your ability you may make the world the happier and the better for your living in it.

Beware of selfishness, and I speak not here of the vulgar selfishness which is synonymous with greed, but of that refined selfishness which pursues its own course, makes a law of its own whim, caprice, or waywardness, without reference to its

effect on others, — which has no tenderness for feeble consciences, no scruple in doing what will betray weaker souls into peril or wrong. For the pulsation of your selfhood through every filament that binds you to any other human soul, you are responsible. So consult with yourself, then, that no souls can bear witness to God against you.

Consult with yourself, but with your immortal self. Were your being earth-limited, vice would still be inexpedient, and so would be arduous virtue, self-denial, earnest moral effort. You would want to get through life with the minimum of friction against obstacles of every kind. You would walk the race instead of running it, and would care chiefly for refreshment by the way, there being no goal at the end. But as an immortal being, you will want to cherish that within you which is not going to die. You will want to enter the higher life, fit for its society, in sympathy with its work and its joy, and in a condition in which you are willing to show your soul to God and to your fellow-men, unclothed and open to all eyes, as it must be when the tabernacle that now veils it from sight shall be trampled down in the dust of the grave.

Finally, consult with yourself as a child of God, bearing his image, which you are bound to cleanse from whatever earthly stain it has incurred, and to keep clean and pure, as ever in his sight. The

nobly born of an earthly father is doubly guilty and worthy of double condemnation, if he disgraces his birth and scorns his sonship. How much more should this be true of you and me, if, God-born, we befoul the birth-tokens which we cannot wholly efface, or if we merely hide them from sight by worldliness and levity! Bearing our divine sonship in perpetual mind, let our constant self-exhortation be, in the words of the great apostle, "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children."

SERMON XIII.

CASTLE-BUILDING.

"Let every man take heed how he buildeth." — 1 Cor. iii. 10.

My subject is castle-building, a matter of small concern, some practical hearer may say to himself, — mere vague, transient romance of thought, as seems to be suggested by its French name, *chateaux en Espagne*, castles in Spain, which, when the Pyrenees were an almost insurmountable barrier, seemed to the prosaic French mind a region of fable, a dream-land. Our tendency is to attach more importance to what one does than to what he thinks or imagines, and this is, for the most part, right in our estimate of others; for we cannot look into their chambers of imagery. But for ourselves, conduct is not an absolutely certain standard of character. Conduct is the joint product of character and circumstance, and circumstance may be often, long, or always the more influential factor of the two. Then, also, "the things that are seen are temporal," and conduct, though it may have momentous influence, spends itself and ultimately leaves no vestige, while the "house not made with

hands" which we build in the inner man may be "eternal in the heavens," or may be such as the first breath of heaven will dissolve into empty air and leave us houseless. In general, too, it is character that determines conduct; and even if at the outset, or sometimes, weaker, in the issue and in the long run it is almost always stronger than circumstance.

We worthily congratulate ourselves on our moral freedom; yet is not this, for not a few of us, a past rather than a present endowment? We were all free; but are we all free now? I can imagine here to-day (though I should be sorry to know that there is such a person present) a man so entirely the slave of some vile lust or appetite that I might place before him in the most vivid word-painting the utter foulness and shamefulness of his cherished vice, with the certain ruin of estate, body, and soul impending over him, that I might add all the horrors that the severest and most realistic school of theology would annex to such a doom, and that he might believe every word that I said, yet before my voice had died upon his ear, were the opportunity offered, he would show how truly he was the bond-slave of sin. On the other hand, I trust that there are many who hear me, whom not the most intense temptation, not the fabled ring of Gyges which made its wearer invisible in his evil-doing,

not the absolute certainty of concealment from all men, and even from the Divine eye, could render guilty of flagitious crime, of flagrant dishonesty, of vindictive malice. Yet that profligate could have been a saint, and you, my friend, on whose purity and integrity no stain or shadow has ever rested, might have been a fit object of scorn and loathing. There was a time when Nero might have been as good a man in his life as Seneca was in his writings. There was a time when St. John might have developed into a Judas.

In speaking thus, I am not unmindful of the power of heredity; but that it is a power successfully rebelled against and overcome is shown by the instances, by no means rare, in which sons are scourged into virtuous lives by shame for a father's vices, or driven into vice by the harsh and unlovely aspect of a father's virtues, often bequeathing in full to their own children the legacy which they had suffered to lapse over one generation. Nor do I forget the possibility of a late change of character. Men of the worst type have been reformed often enough to show that long-suspended animation in a human soul is not necessarily death, and thoroughly good men cease to be good often enough to give the faintest gleam of possibility to the old story of the fall of the angels. But practically, and in the great majority of cases, freedom of

choice and action, at no late period on the part of those who yield to evil propensities, issues in a condition which deserves no better name than abject slavery; while, on the other side, it rises into a freedom within and never beyond the broad and ever broadening range of all things noble, excellent, and godlike.

In point of fact we act most efficiently when we least seem to act. We will the most imperatively when we are entirely unconscious of willing. We shape character and conduct when we think that we are doing nothing at all. What we call our idle hours are our most busy hours. What we consider as mere dreams have more reality in them than our whole lives beside. Moreover, our young days, because they are fullest of these day-dreams, get so strong a hold upon the coming years that we can never shake off their influence, and can escape their absolute control only by what seems a life-and-death struggle. It is then that we build. We afterward live in what we have built, and while we live in it, it is hard to alter it, and especially difficult, beyond all save exceptional enterprise, to remove its underpinning and to put a new foundation beneath.

We may in our youth build as we please, or build at haphazard. We may construct a fabric after the pattern which God will show us if we

commune with him, or we may choose our architect among desires or proclivities whether earthly, sensual, or devilish. We may be groveling or ambitious in our plans. We may build a structure that shall have nothing above the ground-floor, and a large part underground; or we may erect an edifice that, like a Grecian temple, shall be grand, but wholly terrestrial; or we may rear a roofless castle with heaven-aspiring walls and turrets, that shall wait for its topstone till time is merged in eternity.

But, as I have said, youth is the building time. It is then that the spirits come and go at our bidding, and they crave employment. Resolutely spurned, they cease to be importunate; made welcome, they put all that is in them into their work, and leave traces of their handicraft in every part of the building.

I think that those of you who have passed beyond early youth will confirm me in my statement that character grows more than from all else from what are called the idle moments, the listless, dreamy seasons, the reveries of boyhood and girlhood. You then shaped the ideals which you are now realizing. Low tastes and pleasures have their rehearsal in thought and fancy, it may be feared, long before the restraints of home-life and parental guardianship leave room for their indulgence.

Those who have made to themselves gods of gold carved or cast the models of them before they had the handling of any save the baser metals. The daring adventurers were in perils oft, while still under careful watch and ward. The enthusiastic lovers and cultivators of literature and science touched their goal in clear vision before they started on the race. As for those who seek an incorruptible crown in the service of God and man, though in this most arduous of pursuits there may have been intermission and sometimes even retrogression, the aim, the purpose, the very form and image of high spiritual excellence was familiar to their early years, and has never ceased to restrain, direct, and guide them.

To put what I have said into different yet equivalent form, hope gives shape to character. We mean to be, we strive to be what we hope to be. We already are, in a preponderant measure, what we hope to be. Our lifeway inevitably takes the trend of our hopes; and hope underlies our day-dreams, builds our air-castles, is brooded on in our quiet, lonely hours, and often makes quiet and seeks solitude that it may be brooded upon, and realized in prophetic fancy, which often has more of reality than there is in its objects when fully attained.

In all that I have said I have been preparing to

lay strong emphasis on the proposition which I have already intimated, namely, that our castle-building, our day-dreams, constitute the chief field for the exercise of the will-power. Had the old prophet been an adept in mental philosophy, he could not have uttered a precept more thoroughly based on the immutable laws of human nature than when he said, "Consider your ways." It is the one thing which we can do. Our freedom lies chiefly in our capacity of attention, of continuous thought, of thought into which enters the element of approval or repudiation, of love or of abhorrence. I know that in my youth I could call up certain unworthy objects of desire, pursuit, or endeavor in such relations to my spiritual nature, in such bearing on my permanent well-being, as to make me loathe them; and when those objects were without my agency forced upon my momentary thought, I am sure that I then had sufficient will-power to drive them out, to shut them out, to keep them out. Or I could bid them stay, enjoy them for a time, saying to myself that I could never be induced to give them anything more than heart-room; and thus harbored, they would have been sure to return, and I should have made them welcome, and invited their frequent recurrence, and thrust out other thoughts that I might entertain them. I know that I had equally a double course open to me, and

entirely at the arbitrament of my own will, as to the noblest objects of spiritual ambition, pursuit, endeavor. I could say to myself, "These are graver subjects than befit the days crowned with spring-flowers, — they deserve thought, but they can wait, — they belong to the shady side of life." Or I could clear within me a place in which they could show themselves in their pure golden radiance, with their gems and jewels of amaranthine beauty, so that I should want to see them again and often, the more and the oftener because in my destitute youth I needed and craved raiment that I should never be ashamed of, and adornment that should grow richer and brighter as the years rolled on.

Now in these day-dreams, in which thought and feeling are often more deeply concerned than in what seems the life-work, the will is intensely active. We are hardly aware that it is so, because we do not frame specific volitions as to individual acts. But we make collective volitions in which individual acts are as truly included as are the several members of a species in the name of the species. What you think that you willed yesterday or to-day is very probably one of a fascicle of volitions bound together by a definite purpose, which you really willed five, or ten, or twenty, or forty years ago. If there has been any yielding to an evil pro-

pensity or impulse, more probably than not the surrender took place at some period which you cannot distinctly recall, when you virtually said, and have never retracted it, to some alluring form of wrong, "Be thou my good." Or if you have within the last few days performed some act of self-denial, wrought some arduous work of love, made some decisive onward and upward movement in the higher life, you willed it when, at the parting of the way, with the diverging life-routes as distinctly present to your thought as are the diverging streets of the city to the fleshly eye, you made choice of the path on which linger the sacred footprints of your Redeemer. That volition, — it may not have been momentary; it probably was shaping, nurturing, and strengthening itself through a series of day-dreams, which were truly heavenly visions, — that volition took in a life-time. Though it was in the simplest form, "I will obey God," "I will follow Christ," "I will conform myself to the absolute right," — it was complex and multitudinous, and you have ever since been unrolling it, and taking out its contents one by one.

From what has been said it appears that there is great risk in castle-building, — that it is not the idle, aimless waste of vacant hours, but a building of castles that we are going to live in, and that will immeasurably outlast our earthly habitations.

What, then, is the advice to be given? Not to build? An advice more easily given than taken. No soul worth saving can help building. He who did no work of this kind would have a name to live rather than any real life of mind and spirit. The only fit counsel, and that, of vital, soul-saving importance, is in the words of our text, "Let every man (and be it added with intensest emphasis, let every child, let every youth) take heed how he buildeth." We have also in our context the first suggestion about the edifice. — "Other foundation (fit to be built upon) can no man lay than Jesus Christ;" for Jesus Christ is the Everlasting Right incarnate, and as such, has been consciously or unconsciously built upon by every good man since the world began; but with his words as interpreted and illustrated by his life we have a corner-stone so squared, smoothed, and polished, as by its visible magnificence to prescribe like symmetry and beauty for whatever is built upon it, and to cast shame on whatever structure may show tokens of carelessness or meanness, of groveling tastes or paltry aims.

There are many ways in which we may build on Jesus Christ. We may build upon him our faith, our hope, our human sympathies, our world-wide charity. But I am now speaking of him as the foundation for our castle-building, for our ideal of character, and of the earthly future which we hope

to realize. As to this ideal, I believe that if, aside from what is commonly called theology, a large part of which is unmeaning verbiage, and the rest philosophy, a youth or a child could take the story of Christ in the Gospels, and read his words and his life as those of an actual being who was born and lived and died as a man among men, he could not fail to be so enamored with his spirit and character as to make Christ-likeness the one dream and longing of his soul, thus to lay the beams and flooring of his castle on the Rock of Ages, and thence to shape the virtues and graces of that divine humanity into its columns and its buttresses.

Build thus, my young friends. There are wakeful night hours, hours of travel, times of inevitable listlessness, times when you are weary of work, yet the mind will not rest. In these you are building somehow, — you are imagining for yourselves a bright, happy, prosperous future. I would not have a sunbeam in this picture quenched or dimmed. No matter how bright and closely clustered the sunbeams are. Build your castle of them, and if you do, you will find none so bright as those from the Sun of righteousness, and they will give to the structure its strength and permanence. Dream as your fancy prompts you of what you will attain, acquire, and do ; but above all, dream of what you will be, — of the heart-home of principle and char-

acter, in which you will do your life-work and harvest its fruits. But do not roof your castle. Your ideal will grow as you grow. A more delicate tracery, a finer, richer beauty of holiness will be constantly looming before your fancy, to be built into your ideal, and thence embodied in your life. You may make mistakes or failures, which must be corrected or supplied in your ideal, that they may no longer disfigure the fair proportions of your life-structure. Nor should you regard your work as done so long as you can catch a glimpse of any ray, or line, or tint of sweetness, loveliness, beauty, in your Saviour's character which you can make your own.

But what is to be said to those who have built on other foundations, — who have formed and are realizing, perhaps thus far successfully, other ideals of character? Hard as I have said it is, especially late in life, to put in a new foundation, it yet may be done, and were the difficulty of doing this seriously felt, it would be done oftener than it is. But it is too common a feeling that, though this ought to be done, it can be done at any time, no matter how late. There are life-structures which need not be demolished, and lack only a fitting foundation to ensure their completion in strength and beauty. There are, also, life-structures in which lust, passion, appetite, or greed has been the master-builder, and these, when they become scandalously

offensive, one sometimes attempts to improve, but to no purpose. They do not admit of improvement. The materials are all bad. Reformation, *re-formation*, is what is needed, and it must begin with the foundation, in the profound feeling that other fitting foundation can no man lay than Jesus Christ. Happy they who have yet to build, if they will only hold in faithful memory the apostolic exhortation, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth."

SERMON XIV.

THREE PARABLES.

"Without a parable spake he not unto them." — MATT. xiii. 34.

THE oriental way of saying, "Teaching by parable was his usual method," and Jesus gives his reason for it, — "Because seeing, they see not, and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand," that is, they are so light-minded and so little accustomed to spiritual themes of thought, that formal, abstract statements of truth and duty could not penetrate to their hearts and souls; while they can remember a story, a parable or fable, and as they turn it over in their minds, they may attain to some part of its meaning, and derive some instruction and salutary influence from it. These parables are indeed full fraught with the divinest wisdom. They contain layer upon layer of meaning, and while a child can understand them, with our maturest knowledge and experience we grow into, but never beyond, their deeper significance.

There are three of these parables given by St. Matthew in succession, which manifestly belong together, and have a peculiar worth as together

comprising the sum of human duty, and giving a comprehensive chart of the way to heaven, namely, the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, that of the talents, and that of the arraigning of the whole race of man before the judgment-seat. They are all the more interesting and momentous, when we consider the time of their utterance. It was the Wednesday of Passion-week. Our Lord stood on the Mount of Olives, with his disciples and probably a multitude beside; and these parables are the close and the fit consummation of his public ministry. All that remained for him was to affix equally by his death and by his resurrection the eternal seal of the living God upon his gospel. Each of these parables might well claim a series of sermons; yet I think that it may not be without profit for us to consider them together.

We have, first, the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, — those who had their torches ready for lighting at the unforeseen moment when the bridal procession should draw near, and those who had no oil, and before they could get any, the procession passed in to the wedding banquet, and they were shut out in the dark. The lesson of this parable is constant preparation for the unforeseen, than which human life has nothing more certain, or so momentous in its bearing on character, and especially preparation for death; certain, but almost

always unforeseen, and to be fitly met only with torches well trimmed and well fed. In this we have Christ's example in his own death, which he, indeed, foresaw as to the time, but could not have fully foreseen as to the unutterable horrors of those hours of anguish and torment on the cross in which imagination must have fallen immeasurably behind experience. Preparation with him preceded trial. He triumphed on Calvary because he had conquered in Gethsemane. We need this lesson; for our strongest temptations are those that are flashed upon us when we feel safe and self-sufficient, — our heaviest afflictions are those which fall upon us like a thunderbolt from a clear sky; and it is solely by such preparation as shall strip sin of its allurements and despoil sorrow of its despair and its bitterness, that we can hold fast our integrity and purity, and maintain our serene submission and trust.

For death, who is there that does not feel the need of being prepared, and that does not mean to prepare himself when the shadow shall begin to darken his life-way? But death often casts no shadow before, and often the shadow steals on the light by such insensible degrees that it is hardly recognized till the moment of total eclipse. But, my friend, did you know for a certainty that death was close at hand, that you would not see in this

world the beginning of another year, how would you live for your few remaining days on earth? I think that you would all of you have a ready answer. Live so, then, to-day, to-morrow, every day; for you need to be always prepared for the inevitable, yet unforeseen.

But the best answer which can be given to this question is embodied in the parable of the talents, — a parable, by the way, to which we are indebted for the word *talent* in the sense of capacity or endowment. A master, who is going to be long absent, gives his servants different sums of money, talents, that is, large sums, all of them; for even the one talent would have seemed great wealth to Jewish peasants, or to the Galilean fishermen who had come up to the feast and many of whom were accustomed to listen lovingly to Christ. This money they were to put to profitable use, so that it should be constantly growing, and ready to be shown in their several accounts with compound interest on their master's return. The servants that have used their money have doubled it, and they receive rich praise and great reward; the one who has merely let his talent lie idle has it taken from him, and is put to open shame and grief. Just so is it in life. The talents, be they few or many, unused, are wasted and lost; those kept in constant use are as constantly growing. Among the

(so-called) harmless, but utterly useless persons to be found in all classes of society there are not a few who were capable of the best. There are those who were brilliant once, who from sheer idleness have sunk into a faded boyhood or girlhood, no longer young, but too frivolous to grow decently old, clinging convulsively to the skirts of the society which they once adorned, but which now spares no effort to cast them off.

On the other hand, history and life are rich in examples of not only the five talents, and the two, but even the one made ten. It is so in literature and art. The chief difference between taste and genius is that mere taste discerns and approves what is excellent, while genius is the intensity of will-power to achieve and realize what taste is content with admiring. One of the greatest of literary curiosities is an article in the Quarterly Review that criticised with unsparing and contemptuous ridicule Tennyson's first volume of verse, which though all of it in rhyme, certainly did not deserve to be called poetry. But from groveling at the foot of Parnassus, by faithful industry he has climbed to its summit. There are preserved in the Ambrosian Library at Milan the early studies in drawing of Leonardo da Vinci and of several other great artists of his age, — sketches of as little promise as you might see in the work of raw beginners in the

drawing-classes of our public schools, showing that the men whom all the world admires did not spring into fame, but reached it by patient endeavor through failure and shortcoming.

The same law applies preëminently to the spiritual life, and to those traits of character which fit and empower the Christian soul for commanding influence and extended and enduring usefulness. Many of those whose holiness has made them, not only good, but great, illustrious, in some instances absolutely world-renowned, have been persons of slender native ability, but have been nurtured and made strong, in mind no less than in heart, by the incessant and faithful culture of those faculties which ally the soul to God, — of that love which is far greater than intellect, becomes more and more in this world a cognitive power, and in a higher state of being will supersede the slow processes of reasoning, and make intuition of the divine the supreme source of knowledge. Dr. Tuckerman, the pioneer missionary to the heathen within sound of Sabbath-bells, was, as a very young man, though excellently good, of such unattractive dullness and of ability reputedly so feeble, that his society was shunned rather than sought by his brethren in the ministry, and he was regarded as fortunate beyond hope in securing a settlement in the poorest and most obscure parish within easy reach of Boston.

Not many years elapsed before his parsonage and his little church in Rumney Marsh had become a Mecca for saintly pilgrimage, and when he returned to his native city as a minister to the poor, and was in familiar association with Dr. Channing, there were in their circle of intimate friends those who were in doubt which of the two was the greater man. I well remember, when he was my guest and occupied my pulpit, how I felt in my home, as did all who saw and heard him, as if it were an angel from heaven that was with us.

The late Earl of Shaftesbury had by nature but the one talent, and hardly that. He derived the articles of his religious belief, no less than his Christian faith and character, from a servant in his father's family, and his mind never broadened in the least beyond her very narrow creed, indeed, he never dared to think or look beyond it; while on all subjects not within the range of his philanthropy he never changed, and especially never enlarged, his first views or impressions. But he was drinking in his Divine Master's spirit in full and ever fuller draughts, and thus the one talent was doubled and quadrupled and multiplied an hundredfold. In him the Christ-given power of raising and blessing all classes and kinds of the depressed and wronged and suffering had a resplendent manifestation, a series of signal successes and

glorious triumphs, such as had not been witnessed since the age of the apostles.

Equally where the five talents have been given, the thorough and persevering culture of the religious nature has borne a foremost part in making the five ten, and many times ten. How eminently true is this in poetry! You can hardly name a poet who has had, or who promises to have enduring fame, who has not, like Milton, sole and unrivaled in song, sought inspiration from the brook that flows "fast by the oracle of God." It is this spiritual industry, this patient soul-thrift, this unceasing aim at the highest and best that the human soul can attain and be, which, more than capacity independent of consecration, has made Whittier, the village shoemaker, second to no poet of our time in blended strength and sweetness. He but defines his own diligent and noble lifework in one of the stanzas of that glorious hymn of his which one cannot read the hundredth time without fresh emotion, —

> "Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
> What may thy service be?
> Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
> But simply following thee."

I have spoken of great lives, which very few are fitted or destined to lead. It is therefore of more consequence that we consider the application

of this parable to our common life, and I would say emphatically, — There is no position in life, into which a man may not put all that there is in him of culture, refinement, and moral worth, to his own honor and to the benefit of his fellow-men. It is not the place that makes the man, but the man that makes the place. The maker puts all that is in him into what he makes, the doer into what he does. The entire Deity is so enshrined in all his works that, with the inward eye fully opened, we should find englobed in the field-flower or the leaf-bud the same attributes that are revealed in the courses of the stars and the march of worlds; and in like manner those who are thoroughly renewed in his spirit can so embody their entire selfhood in common activities and humble duties, as to make that which were else small great, that which were else mean lofty, that which were else earthy, heavenly and divine.

In treating of the second I have been inevitably trenching on the ground covered by the third parable. How are we to employ our talents, the powers given us by God, — the powers enlarged and multiplied by our own diligent culture? It hardly needs to be said that the requirements of the second parable can be met only by lives of stainless purity and of inflexible truth and uprightness; for all that is mean, dishonest, false, or vile

is as harmful to one's growth in intellect and in capacity as to his spiritual well-being. No bad man can make of his talents what ought to be made of them. But the third parable prescribes more than the avoidance of evil. It defines the use and end for which our talents are bestowed, and as to which the Divine Master requires a strict account of every servant. Mark, — this third is a parable, not a prophecy. It is sometimes regarded as a prophetic description of the last judgment (so-called). This last judgment, however, is a mere figment of the theologians, founded in part on this parable, but not authorized by it, — a harmful figment too ; for in relegating the thought of judgment to a period indefinitely remote, it has made men unmindful of the judgment-seat never unoccupied and the books ever open. The teaching of Christ and his apostles is that the soul goes to its own place, receives according to the deeds done in the body, at death, not at some far-off period of general assizes. But the parable, which has all the marks of a parable, represents a gathering of the nations of the dead before the Supreme Judge, and the passing upon them of the sentence of approval or of condemnation, according as their lives have been generous or selfish, devoted to human good or to personal ease, emolument, or ambition. In point of fact, it is not only as stars in heaven, but as

centres of light on the earth, that the unselfish, and they alone, shine. There have been not infrequent instances of the most diligent and persevering culture of capacities large even at the outset, where the life has been self-centred and loveless; and such men have shone, not as suns or as stars, but as oven-fires, intensely brilliant, yet diffusing neither light nor heat, and early quenched in utter darkness; while those whose names endure and are held precious, saints and heroes, sages, poets and artists, patriots and philanthropists, those equally who in quiet ways and lowly spheres, as they have gone about doing good, have trailed after them and left behind them lines of living light, — all these have lived, not for greed or for fame, but that they might do, each in his place and calling, the work which God had given them to do, for the solace, comfort, growth, uplifting, eternal salvation, of their fellow-men. All such the Judge recognizes as his own benefactors, because they have served those whom in his tender love he identifies with his very self, and they have thus won his gratitude as if what is done for man were done directly for him.

Did not time fail me, there is hardly need that I say more. The parables themselves are their own best exposition and commentary. Separately, they are profoundly impressive; immeasurably more so,

when taken as they were uttered, consecutively, as parts of a whole. To us the dying Saviour says, "Be ye also ready; for ye know neither the day nor the hour" when ye shall be called hence. How shall you be thus ready? Only by putting to their full use and increase whatever powers and capacities God has given you. How are you to employ them? In doing good, — in making the world the happier and the better, — in giving ever new joy to him whom you serve and gladden, whenever you serve even the least of that race not one of whom does he scorn to reckon among his brethren. Thus prepare for death by filling life to the full with duty and with usefulness, and you shall wake from the death-slumber to the summons, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

SERMON XV.

BEAUTY.

"He hath made everything beautiful in his time." — Eccl. iii. 11.

"He hath made everything beautiful in his time," or rather, in its time, *his* being generally employed in our English Bible for *its*, which was just coming into use when our translation was made.

Have not many of you said with regard to the past spring and the opening summer, This is the most beautiful season that I have ever seen? And have you not often said the same in former years? In saying so you have told what is or ought to be the truth with every one of us. Nature is no more beautiful to-day than it has been before; but our receptivity has grown, or ought to have grown. There is always around us a wealth of beauty far beyond our utmost capacity of feeling and enjoying, and the more we are æsthetically, morally, spiritually, the more of it we can take in, and transmute into gladness, praise, and love. There is a sense in which the maker always puts his whole

self into what he makes; and could we interpret nature as we think we can a written book, we should find everywhere the Infinite mirrored in the finite. This is the reason why we are never tired of nature. I should hardly dare to live always near the works of human art which I most admire; they are more to me because the Atlantic intervenes, though there are some of them which it is worth the voyage to see. While full of the divine inspiration, they yet are human works; their contents are finite, and by long familiarity with them I might in process of time take in all that they have for me, might outgrow their vivid interest, might become weary of them. But not so with the panorama about me in the outer world, which is as fresh and new to me as when I first awoke to its loveliness, and is yielding me a richer revenue than it ever did before.

"He hath made everything beautiful." There is no so sure token of the Creator as the beauty that is in all nature, — a token which loses none of its authenticity, but even gains force, in connection with the evolution theory. According to this theory every essential organ and member of every plant and animal was developed by need and perfected by use, while those belonging to lower, but no longer serviceable to higher orders of the series have left vestiges of themselves as waymarks in the

progress of development. All this may be true — if I were a scientific physiologist I probably should feel sure of its truth — as to the functional organism of plants and animals; and yet there would remain much that serves no functional purpose and can never have served any. Over and above all possible use, present or past, we see a superfluity of beauty, — flowers of the richest dye and most graceful contour a hundredfold larger than are needed to shelter the tiny seed ripening at their base, iridescent plumage which gives the bird no added speed or power, in fine, numberless combinations which have no imaginable purpose but to adorn the gala-robes which are nature's working-day dress. In point of fact, the phenomena in nature which lie outside of any conceivable course of development or series of evolutions far exceed in number and in magnitude those that fall readily into line under the wand of the scientist. We may then throw aside the old theory of specific creation, and derive the entire framework of organized being from self-plastic energy in primitive monads; and yet we shall find a power beyond self-developing nature that has fringed and garlanded the whole ascending series in the scale of being with rich and varied beauty, betokening a benignant Creator, whose joy-giving spirit has nowhere left itself without a witness.

"He hath made everything beautiful *in its time*," and the changing beauty of the outward world is an ever fresh revelation of the Creator, adapted to renew day by day the loving adoration of his children. No phasis of the outward world lasts long enough to stagnate in our thought. We have not ceased to marvel anew at the thin leafage of spring, hardly less ethereal than the fleecy clouds that bend over it, when we are surprised by the outburst of bloom and the dense foliage through which the sunbeams find no passage. Summer kindles faster than we can count the days into the gold and scarlet of the autumn forests and the kaleidoscopic splendor of the October sunset skies. Autumn seems short when we are overtaken by the hoary majesty of winter, with its glittering wreaths and fantastic masses of driven snow, its stalactites from roof and tree, and those glorious nights, when the moon, conqueror and queen in a cloudless sky, is mirrored in frost-crystals pure and white as her own radiance. Thus along the lyre-strings of universal nature throb ever new strains of harmony, as if the Creator willed that the tones should never pall upon the listening ear, and never cease to call forth from the soul responsive notes of loving praise and worship.

"He hath made everything beautiful in its time." There are, indeed, interludes that have no

present charm, yet none the less beautiful. There are those dreary spring rains, when for days together neither sun nor star appears, and nature wears a funeral robe. But what wonderful quickening of beautiful life under that genial baptism! What heaving of earth-clods with the germs of flower and blossom and golden grain! What eager drinking in through the living mouths of unnumbered rootlets from the river of God which is full of water! Thus in all that seems forlorn and desolate we have only the laboratory of beauty; while suspended vision gives but a deeper glow, a fuller joy, when nature smiles again, and what was wrought in darkness reveals itself in the broad sunlight, gladdened, enriched, glorified.

The definite purpose to embody beauty in the order of nature is especially manifest in the persistency and constancy of beauty throughout the inevitable changes of a system in which decay and dissolution are perpetual, in which death feeds life, and life while it lasts is prolonged only by dying daily. Were the problem presented to a theoretic world-builder of a world in which the external tokens and aspects of vigorous and fruitful life shall alternate with periods, as long or longer, of life fading, extinct, and renewed by infinitesimal increments, he might provide in his scheme for some fair show of blossoming, fruitage, and exuberant

gladness; but so to embroider the veil thrown over retreating and perishing life as to make it more gorgeously and gloriously beautiful than that whose vanished splendor it covers, would transcend the wildest dream of the most sanguine cosmogonist, yet is perfectly realized every year in the changing seasons that are full of God.

Equally with regard to the varied experiences of the earthly life, God has made everything beautiful in its time. It is with us in life as it is in our climate,— the clear and sunny days far outnumber the cloudy and stormy. Happiness is the current; sorrow the ripple on its bosom. How many for us are the days that rise and set without a cloud! It is not when we call ourselves happy that we are the most happy. Indeed, when enjoyment is our special aim, I think that there is almost always some shadow of disappointment. When we pause and say, "I am happy," there is something less than happiness. But we are so constituted that our fullest enjoyment is found when we are quietly filling our place and doing our duty, when we know that we are faithful and useful, when the extensor muscles of the inner man are in vigorous and healthful exercise, when every day brings its fitting work and every nightfall sees it finished. In this life which we may all lead if we will, there is the beauty of a divine fitness and order, — of harmony

with kindred lives, not only on earth, but in heaven; for what higher joy than faithful duty can we hope in heaven?

But in the darkened seasons through which we must all pass, there is or may be even a richer beauty, though hidden for the moment; for as under the rain-soaked and wind-swept furrows of the spring the hope of the year is bursting into life, so beneath the rains and dews of an afflictive Providence God is ripening for us his harvest of purer desires, nobler purposes, higher aspirations, hopes that lay hold on the life eternal. Then when the sun shines again, and life again smiles, if we have indeed yielded our souls to the tilth of the heavenly Husbandman, there is for us, if a more sober, yet a richer beauty, in the knowledge of divine things into which our faith has ripened, in the experience of the Almighty love to which we betook ourselves for shelter in the storm, in the closer kinship with heaven which, it may be, could have been opened for us only by some of the best beloved who have gone before us, and in the more faithful diligence with which we make all our steps on earth tend heavenward.

In death, too, as God would have it, as Christ has made it, as the rays of the resurrection morning rest upon it, is there not a solemn beauty? not indeed in the grave, not in the earth-garments

which we drop, but in the spirit-robes in which we rejoin those who have passed on before us, and enter into the joy of our Lord.

But as in outward nature, so in life and death, it is He that makes everything beautiful in its time, — he alone, his love and service, the faith and hope of his gospel, the Guide, Saviour, and Redeemer whom he has given us. As it is beneath his blessing that nature puts on her singing robes, so it is through him in us, as his living spirit is the life of our lives, that they can be truly beautiful.

In sin, alone of all things on earth, there is no beauty. Yet as the exuberance of spring and summer verdure festoons even the soilless crags with living green, and sprouts luxuriantly from every cranny and crevice, so are the arid sin-wastes of humanity garlanded with redeeming love, as, springing from the Saviour's cross, it has blossomed and borne fruit in the self-denying toil and sacrifice of heroic and philanthropic souls — apostles, missionaries, martyrs, great men of God, humble saints whose only record is in heaven, delicately nurtured women, too, who in saving souls have shrunk from no service however arduous, no peril however fearful — the whole host of God's elect who have made their Master's work their own. Oh, there is to the spiritual vision no beauty like that of the holy, blessed lives that have been consecrated

to the salvation of their brethren. Then, too, when sin is not covered, but washed away, when from the laver of penitence the cleansed spirit returns to God and gives joy in heaven, then is there "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." But sin, while it lasts, is only deformity and desolation. It is the only blight on God's creation, — all that makes this world of ours other than the type, the prophecy, the forecourt of heaven. Now, then, while everything is beautiful without, be it ours to make all within beautiful. Let us build up the waste places in our souls. Let us fill the desert spots in our lives with plants of our Heavenly Father's planting, that instead of the thorn may come up the fir-tree, instead of the briar the myrtle. Then in us shall God have made everything beautiful in its time.

SERMON XVI.

THE SONS OF GOD.

"Whose son is he?" — MATT. xxii. 42.

A QUESTION which often is found equivalent to asking, Who, or what manner of person is he? Jesus asked this concerning the expected Messiah, and the Pharisees replied, "The son of David," an ancestry which Jesus did not deny, for he could not, but on which he never based a claim, for he could not. Two more unlike persons can hardly be found in the world's history, — the one a more than half-savage tyrant, who, if in spasms of remorse and of devout feeling he indeed wrote those glorious lyrics which bear his name, yet may have had some other authorship, still, even in some of these blended imprecation with thanksgiving, and who disgraced his throne by lust and murder; the other, one whose whole life-record may be comprised in the two entries, "He did always the things that pleased God," and "He went about doing good." If there is anything valid in the law of heredity, the twenty-eight generations that intervened between the ancestor and the descendant were none too many.

Jesus himself claimed to be heard, obeyed, and followed, as the Son, not of David, but of God. The creeds and church covenants all call him so. But why? They give no credentials, no proofs, no birthmarks. I might believe all that they say, and yet recognize no tokens of sonship. If the ancient creeds which some churches hold in almost superstitious veneration contained all that was to be known about Jesus, I do not believe that these creeds would be extant now, or that Jesus would have left in the world's history any trace of his existence. I have no fault to find with the creeds, — indeed, in the oldest of them, miscalled, yet not unworthy to be called, the Apostles' Creed, I should want to make only very slight changes in order to bring it into conformity with my own belief; but I do not find there the Emmanuel, the Christ to whom I have been accustomed from my infancy to look with admiring and adoring love. He lies entirely outside of these compends of faith. He might have been all that they say, and yet no heart have ever had a quicker throb in thinking of him, no life have ever been consecrated lovingly to his service. For they tell us nothing of his walks of mercy in Galilee, of his not spurning the touch of the loathsome leper, of his taking those dear little children in his arms, — poor, shabbily attired children they must indeed have been to have been

brought for the blessing of an unhonored wayfarer, — of his kindly thought for the family of the Gadarene lunatic, sending him home to announce in his own person his restoration from worse than death, of the scenes at the gate of Nain and the tomb of Bethany, of his tender compassion for the outcast sinner, of the undying love that breathed in intercession, forgiveness, benediction on the cross. These are his birthmarks as the Son of God. They were his only answer when John sent to ask, Art thou he that should come? They are worth immeasurably more than all the volumes of Evidences of Christianity that were ever written, and but for them Christianity would not have survived to have its evidences written, nay, would have perished, new-born, with its Founder.

We believe Jesus to have been the Son of God, in a sense unequaled, and seldom approached except by his close followers, because we see in him meekness, benignity, sweetness, mercy, purity, holiness, which can have had its fatherhood only in the Divine perfectness; for in his time and surroundings, such peerless excellence could not have been derived from human tradition, precept, or example; nor yet can an impersonal Nature, though full of God, have shaped and inspired a human soul and life in so entire conformity with our highest conception of God's moral attributes. This

parentage Christ constantly claims and fully authenticates.

But heredity has a reflex meaning. How much do we often learn of a father whom we have never seen from a son who is said to be like him! The instances are by no means wanting in which the beauty or the splendor of a son's life has taught us more of his father than we have been able to gather from all surviving reminiscences of his genius or his transcending moral worth. Jesus recognizes this principle. In all that he says of the Father, he makes him like himself in his moral attributes. A Christlike God is the only conception that we can get from the Gospels. Thus how precisely like Christ is the Father in the parable of the prodigal son, in his pitying love and prompt forgiveness! How un-Christlike is the Father of some happily obsolescent theologies, who has neither house-room nor heart-room for the repentant prodigal till his innocent brother takes in his stead the penalty for his guilt! In point of fact, men, instead of a God in Christ's likeness, have shaped to themselves a God after their own likeness, and have regarded it as their duty, even their privilege to be like him. Therefore is it that men bearing the Christian name have glorified war, have persecuted, slandered, slain their fellow-Christians, have made punishments vindictive, but hardly ever

reformatory, and have divorced from religion the gentler virtues which render it supremely lovely. It is solely because of this false God that the terms "unforgiving Christian," "resentful Christian," are not deemed as self-contradictory and absurd as "Christian drunkard" and "Christian debauchee."

I want to lay intense stress on this point. The prevalent theology of the Scotch Presbyterians and the English Puritans, imported by them into our new world, presented for man's faith a God utterly un-Christlike, — a God whose chief attribute was what was miscalled justice, — miscalled I say; for mercy, which every being owes to every other, is an essential part of justice, and nothing is more unjust than what is called inexorable justice. I care little for denominational names and divisions, so long as this loveless image of our Father in heaven is rapidly fading from the churches in which it has borne sway. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," is the sum and substance of Christianity; and if this be received as the truth underlying all else, it matters little whether the necessarily inadequate conception of the Infinite God be threefold or in undivided unity.

It is perfectly evident that the prime aim and purpose of Jesus was to show the Father. Even his service to the race as an exemplar is secondary to this; for if it is not God's likeness that we see in

Christ, what reason in the world is there for following him rather than any other man? We walk in his steps, that we may thus be followers of his and our Father.

But are we his children? The question of our text may be fitly asked as to each one of us, "Whose son is he?" God's indeed, in a certain sense; but it may be in a far remoter parentage, and by a much longer line of ancestry, than Christ's from David. It is the last link in the chain which the evangelist specifies when he writes, "Which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God," and if the evolution-theory be accepted, we must go back myriads of æons farther to the time when the Omnipotent endowed the atoms of weltering chaos with the power of organism and of progressive development. But there is a more immediate sonship. From Christ, the elder brother, have been transmitted the healing touch, the soothing word, the offices of love in which hand, mind, and soul bear equal part; the life of purity, devotion, and beneficence which blesses all within its sphere, and sheds around itself a beatific radiance; and these are as authentic birthmarks now as when they betokened Jesus to be the Son of God. There is a type of soul, a frame of the inmost spirit, not fashioned by contact with external nurture, nor moulded by society even at its best, nor shaped in

the world's school, but growing only from that close communion, which is a partaking also, with and of the Infinite Love, and in Christian souls from communion with and partaking of the Infinite Love incarnate. The character thus formed has at heart loyalty and love to the Father, God, and from this source the life must flow in purity, in sweetness, in diffusive benevolence, and must more and more fully exhibit those finer lines and more delicate tints which make up the consummate beauty of holiness. Now let it be borne in mind that the creation of such souls, the raising up of such children for the Father in heaven, is the greatest and best work that can be done upon this earth, that whatever else Christ may or may not have done is in the comparison of very small concern, and that in doing this he may claim every title of reverence, honor, and love that human gratitude can confer.

Here, though by way of parenthesis, let me say a word as to the objection sometimes made, that a merely perfect man could not be spoken of as the evangelists constantly speak of Jesus Christ. I would say, drop that word *merely;* for the term *perfect man* is a superlative. There is no greater being in God's universe. If there be heaven-born angels, they hold a far lower place; for they have not had the power of sinning or the discipline of suffering; theirs has not been the internecine con-

flict, the victory, the triumph. Therefore he who alone has borne through the severest fortunes of mortal life his divine humanity unstained, undimmed, has his due place "at God's right hand in the heavens, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named."

To return, of the Christlike character there is but one type. The sons of God all bear birthmarks the same in kind, though differing in degree and in grouping; and they are such as they might recognize in one another, if they chose; but they often do not so choose. It is as if the children of a large family, who all looked alike, and had been brought up alike, and were not unlike in character and conduct, were to refuse to call one another brother and sister because they could not agree in the same story about something that their father said or did before any of them were born. That among the genuine children of God there should be wide differences of opinion about their Father must necessarily be the case, when we consider that in the vastness of his nature even things that seem contradictory may be but different parts or aspects of the same truth, and that on so profound a theme even revelation must by reason of the incompetency and poverty of language conceal much more than it can make known. But none of

these differences of opinion relate either to God's actual fatherhood or to the birthmarks which his children bear. I have lived long enough and have seen a sufficient diversity of people to speak with some authority, and I verily believe that if it were once understood that the term Christian means a Christlike man or woman and nothing less or more, the most rigid sectarian would often recognize his nearest spiritual kindred among those whom he now regards as hardly worthy of his tolerance, and whom, were such penalties for heresy still in vogue, he would gladly burn.

No man can have less liking for Romanism, as Romanism, than I have. Yet were I to make a catalogue of modern saints, there are not a few Romanists whom I should want to canonize. The last biography that I read was the life of Lady Georgiana Fullerton, who, born in affluence, reared in luxury, belonging to the most brilliant aristocracy of the realm, led a life of constant self-denial and self-sacrifice, feeling all the time, as she gave her angel presence in the lowliest and most loathsome abodes of want, suffering, and sin, that she was but paying an infinitesimal installment of her immeasurable debt to him who gave himself for us all. How many of such lives can we find, also, in various Protestant sects, in which we are sadly prone to overlook the traits of genuine Christ-likeness for peculiarities,

it may be perfectly harmless, with which we have no sympathy!

"Other sheep I have," says Jesus, "who are not of this fold," and though we derive our sonship through Christ, our elder brother, we little understand his revelation of the Father, if we forget that he is none the less present, omnipotent in mercy, and capable of self-revelation, with many, many souls beyond the Christian fold who are joint heirs with the Christ whom they first know in heaven.

I read two or three weeks ago, in the Reminiscences of Rev. Mr. Rogers, a divine of the Anglican Church, a narrative that affected me deeply. This Mr. Rogers is Rector of St. Botolph's Church, in London, in a quarter where Christians are few, and Jews of the poorer sort make up the greater part of the population. He utilizes the large revenues of his church in such Christian work as is most needed in the surrounding district. He announced that on a certain Sunday evening he should preach a charity sermon, and take up a contribution for the relief of the Jews then recently expelled from Russia. When he came to church, instead of a small Christian congregation, he found the edifice absolutely crowded with Jews, and when he gave out the hymn, "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah," the vast congregation, Jew and Gentile, joined in the service of song with such intensity

and fervor, that it seemed as if the roof of the church would be lifted with the volume of ascending praise. The contribution was large beyond all expectation. After the service a very poor old clothes' man, whom Mr. Rogers knew, came into the vestry, and offered half a crown, asking for sixpence in change, because it was the only money he had, and he needed the sixpence to buy his morning's breakfast. I could not but feel that if Jesus had been there in bodily form, as he was in spirit, his own blessed voice would have blended with those of his fellow-countrymen as they sang "the Lord's song in a strange land," and that he would have gone from pew to pew, and laid his hand on many a head, claiming them as of his flock, though not of his fold; while for the man who scanted himself in his daily bread for the sake of those still poorer, he would have repeated with special emphasis his blessing on the widow with her two mites.

As I have already said, the law of heredity has its reflex bearing. The father is known through his children. Is there any other way in our time in which our Father, God, can be so fully known? Nature has its mysteries and its horrors; the course of events, its dark passages and tortuous labyrinths of which we have neither chart nor clew. Of the Providence that girdles the universe, with its poles in the twin eternities, the arc within our cognizance

is too infinitesimal for our calculus. And were it not so, were there neither obscurity nor suffering, even an earthly Paradise could not reveal the very heart of God, any more than an affluent home can reveal the depth, richness, beauty, of a father's tender care or a mother's unslumbering love. A person, whether human or divine, cannot have an adequate impersonal manifestation. Therefore is it that Jesus says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven." We, my friends, can show and ought to show the Christlike God whom we worship, by being ourselves Christlike. Your and my danger is that we show not a false, but an inadequate reflection. We need each to ask himself, "Is there that in my life and character in which God makes himself seen and felt? Can I hope that those who know me will feel that through me they know God the better, can be drawn to a dearer love of him and a more faithful service?" There is not a divine trait in Christ, which may not be ours, and for which men may not glorify God in us.

Now suppose such characters multiplied. Suppose only a single church thus constituted, from its diversities of age, culture, condition, calling, as from a mirror with unnumbered facets, presenting in many-colored glory the primitive rays of eternal light in the Father's countenance, it would exert

an evangelizing power such as the world has never witnessed, but such as St. Paul saw in prophetic vision, and evidently thought it near, when he wrote, "The earnest expectation of the creature, that is, of all things created, waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," of the sons who show the Father, — for that combined, manifold, cumulative manifestation which shall convince, persuade, renew, sanctify, redeem entire humanity.

It must be admitted that there is no such collective manifestation now, — no community, no body of Christians, that gives a true and adequate reflection of the divine image. I have unbounded reverence for the missionary enterprise; but until Christianity can make a better show of itself, the missionaries can effect very little. Wherever they go, Satan sends before or with them his missionaries tenfold in number and in efficiency. I believe it to be a fact, and it is a typical fact, that the very vessel that carried the first American missionaries to the Eastern hemisphere had rum for its cargo. The missionaries, too, have often been like the men that in Nehemiah's time rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem, who with one hand wrought in the work, and with the other held a weapon; for those of rival sects have often maintained an armed truce, — and not always a truce, — rather than peace in their fields of missionary labor. Meanwhile there is no

way in which those outside of Christendom can see any collective exhibition of Christian life and character; but as they gain a more extended knowledge of the actual condition of Christendom, they must behold much that is absolutely repulsive. I have always felt great respect, as for a truly Christian soul, for a former emperor of China who banished the missionaries, saying, "Wherever these Christians come, they whiten the soil with dead men's bones."

Equally is the collective manifestation of the sons of God needed at home and all around us in the growth, to which we cannot be blind, of worldliness, indifference, unbelief, and still more, of a broad hospitality of mind for every last new utterance of self-commissioned seers and agitators, however absurd or vapid. The (so-called) evidences of Christianity are all that they ever were; but in our fast age who reads them or cares for them? No testimony in behalf of a religion two thousand years old can arrest and hold the public mind, in these times when novelty treads on the heels of novelty, and the marvel of yesterday has to-day become obsolete. What is needed is the evidence of a religion at this very moment as young, fresh, new, and strong as when its divine words fell from its Founder's lips and were crystallized in his life.

To the manifestation of the sons of God two things are indispensable. The first is that Chris-

tians of every name and form shall regard Christ-likeness as the one prime aim and endeavor, as the only thing that can make them Christians, as that without which sound doctrine and ritual conformity are always worthless, and, even worse, utterly contemptible when they are made, as they sometimes are, a substitute for character, or an apology for defective character. The second is that those who are making Christ-likeness their supreme aim shall recognize Christ-likeness as a token and bond of brotherhood wherever they find it, under whatever secondary name, in whatever compartment of the Christian fold, in whatever outside pasture, Jewish or Pagan. In both these directions (and they are virtually one) there has been progress of late, yet still slow. But collective manifestation can be only the aggregate of individual manifestations, which must seem few and sparse at first. You and I may bear our part toward this grand result, by truth, purity, uprightness, piety befitting the sons of God, and by a charity that shall leave none of his household beyond its pale; and as fast as the Church shall awake to this her need and duty, and shall show herself in her redemption-robes, pure and white as that of Christ's own righteousness, his prayer will have its answer, "that they all may be one, even as we are one, I in them, and thou in me, that the world may know [and till then the world will never know] that thou hast sent me."

SERMON XVII.

THE HIDDEN MAN OF THE HEART.

"The hidden man of the heart." — 1 PETER iii. 4.

I CRAVE this morning the special attention of my younger hearers, not because my sermon will concern them only or chiefly, but because I am going to speak of character, which is more easily formed in earlier than re-formed in later years.

It is a striking fact that among the signal wrecks of character that have been multiplied of late, a large proportion have been those of reputedly Christian men, and in some cases, of men of eminently high standing as Christians. I should be glad to believe them all hypocrites. They would in that case have rendered a priceless testimony to the real worth and the normal genuineness of the Christian name and profession; for men counterfeit only that which has an intrinsic and established value, — base coin is not worth counterfeiting. But I have no doubt that most of these men were sincere in their religious profession, that they had strong religious feeling, and that they were entirely unaware that they lacked religious principle, or

else thought that if the feeling were right, it would supply the place and do the work of principle. Now it seems to me certain that there may be strong and earnest religious or *quasi*-religious feeling, which has not its seat, centre, and source in the hidden man of the heart.

Let me explain. In the human body there are sympathetic nerves, through which a feeling may be perceived at a point remote from its source. A pain in the left arm may proceed from the lungs. The heart may be sound, and yet thrown into wild disturbance by inflammation of the brain. Weariness of the limbs is often felt more in the head than in arm or leg. On the other hand, any healthful stimulus given to the organs of respiration or of digestion is felt, not in them, but in the clear brain, the firm tread, the strong hand-grasp. The case is analogous as to mind and soul. There are sympathetic spirit-nerves running through taste and feeling, the cognitive and the active powers, human loves and Godward sensibilities, so that there may be extreme sensitiveness remote from its source, and, in particular, strong religious emotion from sources not in any proper sense religious.

Thus the æsthetic sense very readily takes on the form and seems redolent of the spirit of devotion. When all that art can contribute renders worship grand and beautiful, the whole inward

nature is uplifted, praise flows with fervor, prayer seems as if floated heavenward on angels' wings, and sweet and tender thoughts cluster in ever denser groups about sacred names and themes. There are words in collect, canticle, and chant, which cannot be said, sung, or heard without thrilling ear and soul with awe or with delight. The love of these paraphernalia of the sanctuary not infrequently becomes a passion, so that the secular life crystallizes around them, and one seems to live for them and in them. Yet it is often merely a refined fetichism, — a worship of the temple or the altar rather than of the present God who makes it sacred. Now I have not a word to say against religious rites. I hold them in high esteem. They deserve to be prized, cherished, and made impressive ; for they have their value in nourishing piety, and still greater worth in giving it expression and utterance not wholly inadequate to its majesty and beauty. But when they are made the be-all and the end-all of religion, they are among the most insidious and perilous of soul-traps.

In like manner sectarian zeal is prone to clothe itself in one's own consciousness in the garb of earnest devotion. A strong interest, primarily intellectual, yet overflowing its source, attaches itself, not only to the fundamental truths, but even more, to the controverted doctrines of Christianity. They

are profoundly felt. The champion of his sect is no heartless combatant. He loves the cause for which he contends, and the more he fights for it, the more dearly does he love it. His heart-strings twine closely and tenderly around each separate dogma. He deems his own well-being for time and for eternity to be identified with his creed, and he sincerely yearns to make those about him and those far from him, and, were it possible, all the kindreds of men partakers of this blessedness. It is in the goodness of his heart, in a generosity like that in which he would give bread to the hungry, only with a stronger impulse of benevolence, as he thinks that he is dispensing the bread that comes down from heaven, that he becomes foremost in exhortation, in movements of propagandism, in all measures for kindling religious life in the surrounding world. Meanwhile he has done little or nothing for his own self-culture, and because his emotional nature has been so strongly enlisted and so deeply moved in connection with what he regards as vital truth, he thinks himself perfectly safe, and is entirely unaware of some leak in his moral selfhood, through which his soul's life-blood has long been slowly wasting itself, and will soon burst out in a sudden torrent of shame and agony. Now let me not be misunderstood. I would have men seek carefully for the truth, maintain their opinions firmly, and

diffuse and propagate them by all means consistent with justice and charity. But I would have them remember that the faith which saves the soul is something more individual, inward, and intimate than the soundest belief, and that without this faith the Christian propagandist is on a lower plane than the apostle assigns to the devils, who also believe, and at the same time have the grace to tremble.

What is most appropriately called Christian work is attended by a similar danger. It is related of Wilberforce that when a sanctimonious friend one day asked him about the condition of his soul, he replied, "I have been so busy about those poor negroes that I have forgotten that I had a soul." He could afford to say so; for years of patient and prayerful soul-thrift had placed him in a position in which his unwearying work was a prayer without ceasing, and his daily walk, a walk with God. But his words express, it may be feared, the state of not a few souls, which, while crowded with philanthropic labor, are really very meagre and needy. There is in such work, when it glows and grows under willing hands, a most blessed consciousness of actual service to the needs of humanity, of community of interest with all holy souls on earth and in heaven, of intimate fellowship with Christ, of being the almoner of the Eternal Father. It is a consciousness which no one can

forego without starving his own soul, and scanting to an infinitesimal quantity whatever of the grace of God may be in his own heart. Yet this consciousness has existed, with beatific fullness, in lives of marvelous sweetness and beauty, which yet in the time of strong temptation have shown the utter lack of firm religious principle. There are at this moment, suffering the not unmerited penalty of violated trusts, men on whom rest accumulated benedictions and for whom go up agonizing prayers from those to whom they had been for years as eyes to the blind, as feet to the lame, as fathers to the poor.

We now ask, What is needed in the hidden man of the heart? First of all, you need your own profound self-respect, — respect, not for what you say, or believe, or do, but for what you are. Do not think that I am speaking non-religiously in naming this as the prime requisite. On the other hand, it is the most religious thing that I can say; for I can make nothing of conscience except as God with and in me; and if I can only pronounce myself worthy of honor, it is not I that say it, — it is God who says it in me. It is mere vanity that is inflated, not conscience that is satisfied, by ritual observance, or by rigid and uncompromising orthodoxy, or by the outside work of Christian charity. But what I mean to say is that with thorough and

unsparing self-scrutiny you should probe the depths of your inmost being, and should tolerate in yourself nothing short of a condition of soul which, could it be laid open to you in a fellow-man, would have your entire and hearty approval, esteem, and love.

Undue stress is sometimes laid on what is called the conviction of sin, which a man may easily have, and yet take little pains to get rid of it, if he can only lay hold on some dogmatic figment by which he hopes to elude its penalty. This is a matter about which you need not trouble yourselves. The conviction of sin comes surely enough and fast enough when you have the perfect ideal before you, and are striving to realize it. But I would rather have you aim at the conviction of righteousness, that is, of rightness, — of a heart right before God. I would have you regard impurity, falsity, dishonesty, selfishness, meanness, not in conduct, but in thought, feeling, desire, impulse, tendency, with just the same shrinking and loathing of the soul, as you would have in your bodily consciousness — if I may use the term — for a ditch full of the most nauseous filth. I would have you feel as if not only yielding to any temptation to overt guilt, but suffering the mind to brood upon it, or tolerating its suggestion by others, were to the soul what a deliberate plunge into the foulness of a sewer or

a cesspool would be to the body. With this feeling you are safe. But you are not so, if you think with complacency on the wrong which you would not do; for thence come those first trespasses just over the border-line of right, or soberness, or purity, in which, without meaning it, you really change sides, set yourself an example which you are almost sure to follow and to exceed, and are not improbably signing your own spiritual death-warrant.

But the horror of evil of which I speak is not negative, nor yet is your dread of what is foul and offensive to the bodily sense merely negative. There are men who do not shrink from defilements of body that would seem to you utterly intolerable. There are those whom the necessities of their occupation have forced to overcome such feelings; there are those of so coarse a nature that they never had them to be overcome. You, however, shrink from such pollution because you have a positive love for cleanness, neatness, elegance, because you esteem them in others, and delight in them in yourselves. In like manner, your abhorrence of moral evil must be merely the negative of your sincere and earnest esteem and love for integrity, purity, and holiness.

I have made this morning, in the responsive reading and for the first lesson, a double use of the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm, monotonous as it

seems, because there is an unsurpassed charm in monotony on so high a key. It is precisely the monotony, always the same, yet ever varied, fresh and new, that ought to be the unceasing rhythm in the hidden man of your hearts and of mine. Strike into that Psalm no matter where, you have, with no little diversity of phrase, the one pervading sentiment, "Oh how love I thy law!" "Thy testimonies are my delight." "How sweet are thy words unto my taste!" There is no knowing who could have written it. David certainly could not. It must have come from some Hebrew antetype of Fénelon or of William Law. Excuse this digression.

What you need within is not preference or approval, but such a love for what is in itself pure, right, and good that you want to make it your atmosphere, and cannot conceive of comfortable living in any other atmosphere.

But do I address any one who, even in a single instance or in any appreciable degree, has contracted the stain of overt guilt? It is of no use for you merely to regret what has taken place, still less, to comfort yourself in the thought that you have not gone far out of the way, that though you have tasted the cup, you have not drunk deep. Think slightly of the matter, and the occasion will not long be wanting, on which you will go farther

and drink deeper. Your only safety lies in your being shudderingly aware of the intrinsic vileness of what you have begun, I will not say to do, but of what you have begun to be, and in your having even a profounder horror of the wrong or evil than if your soul had not been smeared with its pitchy foulness. Slight, formal, perfunctory repentance is worse than none; for it invites a false security. The only penitence worth feeling is that of utter abhorrence, of loathing with the whole soul for that which is to be repented of, and of self-abhorrence and self-loathing for having been guilty of it.

But you may ask, Is not this pure condition of the inward man beyond human capacity? I answer, first, that to strive for it is not beyond your capacity, — that this is the one ideal which you ought to keep, and can keep, continually before you, the goal toward which you must make constant progress, the foremost aim toward which your endeavor must be ever more and more successful attainment; and, secondly, that I by no means suppose that one can attain and be all this without help from God, which, however, you can always have for the asking. I believe in the efficacy of prayer. It contains its own answer. The very lifting of thought, desire, and affection to God purifies while it exalts. It is impossible to bring God and moral evil into your mind at the same time, except it be

with abhorrence or with penitence for the evil. Yet more, prayer is communion, — not mere converse, but partaking. You cannot be intimate with a fellow-man both pure and strong without finding your own being in some measure clarified and invigorated by the intercourse. Still less can you commune with Perfect Holiness as dwelling in Omniscient Wisdom and Omnipotent Love without the inflow of the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind into your own souls. By prayer, however, I mean something more than the mere form or words of devotion. I mean the breathing forth of the desires and aspirations of the soul as to him who welcomes and seconds them with all the fullness of a Father's love.

But you can even more than pray, or rather, you can make your life, in its work and its play, in its gladness and its grief, in its lonely and its social hours, an unintermitting prayer. The phrase "walking with God" had its significance in early time; but it has a fuller and richer meaning now. All of the Divine that is communicable is placed before you in Jesus Christ, and you can walk with him as a younger with an elder brother, drinking in from the sacred record the sweetness, loveliness, beauty of his holiness, and thus shaping a Christ within that shall be your safeguard, your strength, and your joy. This is the highest work that can

be done for the soul, and it is in this that Christ is preëminently the Saviour of men; for sin is the only thing that man needs to be saved from.

The habit in the Christian Church of making the atonement a subject of discussion and controversy has been of immeasurable harm in shutting off from men's minds Christ's supreme office as teacher, exemplar, and guide of souls, which, unless he be, they can get no good from him. The apostles would just as soon have thought of inquiring what part the mother has in the birth, nurture, and training of her child, as what part Christ bears in the salvation of man. They thought of him as the all-in-all, — God in him, to be sure, as God is in the mother. But the two condemnable heresies about Christ in our time are, on the one hand, representing him as appeasing the wrath instead of incarnating the immeasurable love of God, and on the other hand, maintaining any dogma of the atonement narrower than that of St. Paul, when he writes, "Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

To sum up in a single sentence what I would comprehend in the hidden man of the heart, I would say that it is a character which, because your own conscience approves it, you know must be regarded with esteem, honor, and love by him

who alone voices your conscience, — a character which can be fed only by communion with God, and is sustained by a close and ever closer following of Christ, — a character which he who has it not, needs, not only that he may enter with trust and hope on the life beyond death, but equally that he may meet and overcome the earthly temptations which he may have to encounter in their full strength, and to which, in such case, without this character he is as sure to yield, though it be to his irretrievable shame and ruin, as he is to burn his hand if he thrusts it into the fire.

But why "the hidden man of the heart"? In our text the word "hidden" is used in contrast with the "outward adorning" which the writer deprecates. But it is a good word in itself, as designating one aspect of a thoroughly religious character. It is hidden, because it makes no show of itself, no ostentatious profession. Religionists of an inferior type, like some of the lower orders of zoöphytes, have a facility of turning themselves inside out; but he who does this has little within him that is worth showing. Sincere godliness is hidden as the root of the tree is hidden. The deeper the root, the richer are the blossoming and the fruitage. So, too, the more profound and intimate is the soul of goodness, the more radiantly beautiful, and the more full of kindness and benignity is the outward

life. Thus the hidden man of the heart becomes an open secret, known and read of all; for you can do nothing for yourselves in the depth of your profoundest spiritual receptivity, which has not its full counterpart in the purity, gentleness, simplicity, integrity, beneficence, holiness of your outward life, so that while you seek praise from God alone, it will be impossible that men will not say of you on earth what angels will one day say in heaven, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, redeemed from among men. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God."

SERMON XVIII.

HEAVEN OPEN.

"Ye shall see heaven open." — JOHN i. 51.

THERE are many ways into the kingdom of heaven, and those who lay stress on one way are in the right, except when they make theirs the only way. There are many comprehensive definitions of Christianity, and those who lay stress on one of them are in the right, except when they make theirs the only definition. Christianity sanctions divers ways and admits of divers definitions, not because it is vague, but because it is broad, with openings from every avenue by which the lowly, yearning soul can approach it, and yielding with prompt elasticity to every mould in which it can fit into an honest mind and a loving heart. Among these definitions I cannot but lay intense emphasis on the one suggested in my text: "Ye shall see heaven open." I do not believe that Jesus in these words referred to any special manifestations of heaven; for none are reported or hinted at in this connection. But he defined what was going to be the experience of his disciples, as it was his own

conscious experience. His aim was to place them where he stood, to give them the open vision of heaven in which he dwelt, and through them to transmit the vision to all coming time, that his disciples in every age might sit in heavenly places. Christianity may thus be defined — not thereby excluding other definitions, but comprehending them all — as the revelation of the open heaven, of the realm of spiritual being, — the rending away of the separating veil, the making of the two worlds one world.

Jesus with literal truth calls himself, while still dwelling on the earth, "the Son of man who is in heaven." The narrative of the Transfiguration gives but the type of his incessant communion with the Unseen. He ever speaks of the Father, not as believing, but as feeling his presence. He talks to his disciples of his own presence with them, after he shall have left this world, to the end of time. The very phrase by which he designates, not a future condition of being, but his Church here and now, the kingdom or reign of heaven, indicates its government by the felt power, not of the world to come, but of that ever-present world which we thus misname. The regeneration of his immediate followers was no mystic process like that which creeds in vain attempt to portray, but birth into this kingdom of heaven, — into a spiritual consciousness like their Master's.

This was the condition of Christians in the martyr-age. Their daily work was wrought, their conflicts waged, their trials borne, as with the fellowship and sympathy of the cloud of heavenly witnesses. When they broke the sacramental bread and poured the cup of blessing, they inly felt the real presence of their Lord, not in the wafer or the wine, but far closer and more intimately, as soul communing with kindred souls, as heart beating in unison with responsive hearts. They deemed themselves citizens of the heavenly city, while compelled to live as strangers and pilgrims here. Their writings, their utterances on the cross and at the stake, their entire life-record, attest this double, interbraided consciousness. So clear was the transcendental vision of the soul that, if merely subjective, it seemed to them objective, painted on the retina of the fleshly eye, so that to many other saints, as to Stephen, the heavens were opened and they saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

But when Christianity mounted the throne of the Cæsars, and the bishops became courtiers and the Church a temporal sovereignty, there was no longer open vision, and what had been seen with the inward eye died out of men's hearts, yet without being expunged from their creeds. What had been vivid experiences were compressed into narrow dogmas, and frozen into ritual observances. Hence

transubstantiation, formal prayers to the Madonna, angels, and saints, prayers and masses for the dead, the coining of the merits of righteous souls in heaven into pardons and indulgences for sinners on the earth; in fine, the erecting of the Church into a bureau for mercenary transactions between this world and the world beyond. These dry bones of what had been a living faith the Protestant Reformation did not attempt to clothe with flesh and to inspire with vital breath, but recoiled to the opposite extreme. They hung again the veil between the two worlds, relegated the Holy Spirit to the apostolic age or to special seasons of outpouring at doubtful intervals, postponed heaven and hell till after death, and generally till after a grand day of final assizes, and cut in sunder the bonds of conscious fellowship and mutual intercession between those living on the earth and those more truly living in the inner courts of the Father's house.

The more spiritual of the Romanists, while not spurning, transcend the forms of their church, revert lovingly to the spiritual consciousness of which these forms are the vestiges, behold in sight-like faith the unseen witnesses, blend their prayers and praises with the worship of the heavenly host, and regard heaven and earth as but different apartments of the same house of God, in which from room to room are doors and avenues for mutual

sympathy, intercession, and thanksgiving. The consequence is that the biography and literature of the Roman Church are preëminently rich in example, meditation, precept, and aspiration appertaining to the interior life; and while one cannot sojourn long in any Roman Catholic country, least of all in Rome, without seeing the type of the Roman Church in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the image, part of gold, a much larger part of miry clay, the noisome squalidness of the clay only enhances the pure lustre of the gold.

Our supreme religious need is that we too return to the early Christian faith in things spiritual as not remote, or past, or future, but as present and ever-present realities. Chief of all, we need to feel the unceasing presence of God, not merely as the Sustainer of the visible universe, but as unspeakably near to the individual soul. In the technical language of the pulpit and the religious press we often hear or read of the absence or withholding of the Holy Spirit. The very thought, I have no doubt, is among the chief means of producing the state of feeling that is meant by it; that is, of shutting men's hearts against the heavenly voice and vision, — in the apostolic language, of grieving and quenching the Spirit. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," is the word of God to every human soul, under whatever culture. There is

no heart of man, whether in or out of Christendom, that cannot so obey the divine call as to be led to the highest and best within its reach. The knock at the door we cannot help hearing, indeed, after some sort; for who is there that acquiesces in evil or in inferior good who is not distinctly aware of his moral position and tendency? We succumb to the evil or rest in the lower good because we in thought isolate ourselves, consider this knocking at the door as a mere movement of our own minds, regard ourselves as the sole party in the moral questions at issue, attach no superior authority to one class of impulses over the other, and thus yield to that which desire, passion, appetite, or mere indolence renders for the time importunate and urgent. What we need to feel is not the knocking at the door, but its personality. "Behold, I stand at the door, — I, thy Father, I who love thee with an everlasting love, I who yearn for thy deliverance from evil, I who would make thee wholly and forever mine." The inexorable conscience, the sense of the absolute and eternal right, prior to experience, waking with the very dawn of self-consciousness, in the maturity of its strength while all other powers of the inner man are still in their infancy, eludes scientific explanation, transcends the sphere of physical and finite causes, and not in mere rhetorical figure, but in the last analysis of philos-

ophy no less than in the Christian faith, is the God within, the witness to the soul of the Infinite Presence, and of the yearning love which that Presence is. Did we feel this as we say it, where were our sins or our power of sinning? Do you suppose that man is capable of direct disobedience or non-obedience in the very face of God? Can you conceive of aught else than loyal duty and service when the soul says within itself, "Thou, God, seest me, and in the wrong that I do I offend and grieve the Father Spirit, — the Heart that beneath the burden of a sentient universe yet throbs for me?"

In regard to the consequences of wrong-doing there is intense need of replacing the doubtful and distant future by a present, an immediate retribution; continuous, indeed, but not deferred. Future punishment, with the material horrors associated with it, has undoubtedly had no little efficacy in holding and drawing back human souls from imminent perdition. But it has ruined more souls than it has saved; for a sentence held in suspense always suggests the hope of evading it. There is always the possibility of repentance and escape. Death may be far away, a prolonged life may furnish ample space for pleasurable sin, and the long score of transgressions may be wiped clean at the eleventh hour, though in point of fact our

Lord's parable expressly excludes the eleventh-hour penitent, the point of the parable being that those called late as well as those called early obey the call as soon as it reaches them. Far be it from me to speak lightly of the consequences of moral evil. But they do not linger. The Nemesis treads close on the heels of the wrong-doing, and is intensified with every new transgression ; and in no respect is this so emphatically true as in that which ought to shed an almost hopeless doubt and rayless gloom on postponed goodness and late repentance, namely, in the law of self-propagation, which belongs to moral evil as to good, so that sin finds its surest and most baleful penalty in repeated, continued, enhanced, indurated guilt, in an ever feebler capacity of self-recovery, in a condition in which even the delirious ecstasies which sometimes terminate a profligate life can have no hopeful meaning, can indicate no change of character. Indeed, were we to assume the geocentric position of inflexible law, the tendency of moral evil here would preclude all hope for the willingly and persistently guilty. But from the heliocentric position of the infinite love of God, which ought to be the Christian's only standpoint, we cannot but believe that the Divine Shepherd will bring back the strayling to the fold, though it be after such fearful experience of the evil and bitterness of sin as is foreshadowed by the

intensest utterances of warning and of woe that ever fell from any lips but those of the merciful Saviour.

Yet to preclude or arrest the wandering from the right and good, I believe that no terror can have a tithe of the beneficent influence that would flow from a sense of the open heaven. Wordsworth's verse,

> "Heaven lies about us in our infancy,"

represents what ought to be rather than what often is; and if it were true, I doubt whether the "shades of the prison-house" would close over our maturer years so frequently and so utterly as they do now. As a restraining, guiding, and hallowing power, next to the sense of a present God, and making that sense more vivid and realizing, is the sense, which may be trained almost into a consciousness, of the bonds of kindred and of love unsundered by death, — of earth-born, home-born angels who crave for the fullness of their joy that the spiritual kinship be not severed, that those of the circle who remain below bear equal pace with them in purity and holiness, in the faithful service of God and man. This sacred fellowship, once established, leads on and up through the successive ranks of the heavenly hierarchy, and is second to none of the modes by which we may reach the spiritual estate implied in St. John's words, "Truly our

fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Were this the pervading sentiment, instead of the flaming sword, the youth in his time of sore temptation would see the sainted forms of the innocent and holy dead, of the mother whose prayers consecrated his cradle, of brother or sister called to the higher home before there was any stain of earthiness, of those who bore to his early vision the prestige of superior excellence, barring for him the way to the brief paradise of sinful indulgence, or foremost in the joy of heaven when he averts his steps from the path of the transgressors.

Not only as regards the doom of the ungodly, equally as to the happiness consequent on a pure, holy, and loving life we need to replace the future by the present. It has been not unusual to represent the Christian life as one of constant toil and self-sacrifice, endured less for the love of it than for the hope of ultimate reward; and no small proportion of Christian hymnology is on the minor key, in strains of self-pity while this life lasts, and self-congratulation that it will not last always or long. From holy writ have been borrowed not the notes of perpetual gladness that give tone to St. Paul's writings even when he is in the grasp of Nero and in expectation of the most cruel type of martyrdom, but rather certain descriptions of the

merely outward condition of Christians when it was their lot to "die daily." I have often heard it intimated, though not said in so many words, that God is a hard taskmaster, whom no one would want to obey or serve were this life the whole of being. It is, indeed, our unutterable joy that in Jesus Christ immortality is brought into a self-evidencing light; yet were it not so, I cannot but believe that goodness is its own sufficient reward, and I doubt not that it is so in the consciousness of the very Christians who say and sing to the contrary because they think that they ought to.

Moreover, next to the revelation of immortality through Christ, there is no evidence of eternal life so clear and strong as the interior consciousness of those who, through faith working by love, have passed into a life that in its peace and gladness beams luminously above the shadow and spurns the very thought of death. Not only is the consciousness of well-being and right-doing in the sight of God the very summit of earthly happiness; it is so utterly impossible for us to conceive of anything higher as to be the only ideal of heaven on which we can rest. When the writer of the Apocalypse heaps splendor upon splendor, and piles up all that the world has most magnificent, luxurious, and appetizing, to symbolize the new Jerusalem, how mean and paltry does it all look as compared with

the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount! Who would not trample the gold and diamonds and shining robes and starry crown under foot, to be the worthy subject of those blessings on the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, the merciful, the peacemakers? So far as these rest upon us, ours is not a future, far-off heaven, but a heaven begun, a heaven the staple, the material of which does not admit of being made better except so far as our souls grow more pure and holy, — a heaven which no earthly condition can render less radiant and blissful, though there may be, independently of it and as in an outer consciousness, pain, suffering, and grief, from which in God's good time we shall be glad to be relieved, yet which through the alchemy of a living faith feed and enhance the heaven within, so that St. Paul's antithesis, "sorrowing, yet always rejoicing," becomes a synthesis in Christian experience, and the deeper the sorrow the richer the joy.

But in proportion as this heaven on earth becomes ours, the heaven above is, or ought to be, open to us. While on the one hand we have no ground for formulating express beliefs as to kinds, ways, and degrees of intercourse between heaven and earth, of which we can have no clear knowledge till we cross the separating stream, on the other hand we cannot believe that love dies in the hearts

of those who go from us while it lives in ours; and certainly the whole tone and spirit of our Saviour's teaching would cherish in us a felt communion which cannot but have its counterpart with them. Among all the liturgies of the Christian Church, there can be found no prayer more redolent of the spirit of our Lord than that which the Moravians offer in their cemeteries at sunrise on Easter morning, "Keep us in everlasting fellowship with our brethren and sisters who have entered into the joy of their Lord, with those whom thou hast called home in the past year, and with the whole Church triumphant." Be this our prayer. May the thought of the intercessions that go up for us from those whose voices we shall hear no more on earth quicken our steps on the path on which they went home to God, and render the fellowship on our part as true and perfect as it is in their wish and prayer for us, and may the blessing of him in whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is made one be ours forevermore!

SERMON XIX.

AUTUMN.

"We all do fade as a leaf." — Isaiah lxiv. 6.

To the prophet, no image could have seemed more sad than this. In the old world, there is nothing beautiful in the retreating life of the forest, in the waning glory of the year. The leaf borrows no new tints of heavenly glow, but puts on only a sodden, earthy hue that seems typical of decay and dissolution. Such was the aspect of human life when all that man knew of it was comprised in the formula, "Dust to dust." In the time of Isaiah there may have been some dim and feeble apprehension, but no sure hope, of immortality. The prevalent feeling of the most devout men was grateful acquiescence in the Providence which, while making man's days as a hand's-breadth, had yet known how to crowd them with deliverances and blessings without number, — not by any means the faith expressed by a Hebrew some centuries later, "God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity."

With us Nature puts on her singing robes to die. The leaf fades from beauty into glory. Our forests are like the bush on Horeb, burning, yet unconsumed. Tree differs from tree, as star from star; all resplendent, yet each with its own peculiar lustre. There is more of transfiguration than of decay. In these still, bright days, while winter lingers in the background, the leaves become mere skeletons before they fall, and have exhaled into the upper air more of their substance than will drop to the ground.

Have we not here the type of what the fading leaves of human life ought to be, under the light of the life eternal?

We all do fade as a leaf, and many of the leaves on our life-tree wither before the summer is over. In some respects we pass our prime before, in others, we reach it. After middle life, though we may gain, we lose; and by a mere earthly valuation we lose more than we gain. There remain few first experiences in any department of life. The freshness of our joy has passed away. Our ambitions have been brought within a narrower scope. There have been some utter disappointments, and they, even in a successful career, make themselves permanently felt; for we know that what once seemed within our reach is now forever unattainable. Very many of what were once en-

joyments have lost their zest. There remains less revenue to be had from this world than we have already had. Gradually at first, then very fast, the horizon contracts to our view, till for the interminable vista that used to open before us, the luminous mist over it only making it more gorgeous and attractive, we have a brief space lying under a deep shadow, shut in by the death-river.

Meanwhile our standing ground is cut from beneath us by the eager on-rush of a younger generation, who crowd into our places before we are prepared to leave them.

In fine, in an earthly point of view, there must be a continuous fading of what rendered life most enjoyable and hopeful, and, chief of all, in the passing away of so many that were unspeakably precious to us whom new friends cannot replace. All this is the more sad because in the capacity and yearning for enjoyment there is no decline, — nay, there is even growth; for it is not the true life that wanes, but only its earthly resources, which may be all that it has ever sought to feed upon.

But it is ours, if we will, to make the fading leaf more beautiful than ever before, and autumn more full of loveliness and rich promise than spring or summer. Under the clear shining of an undying hope, life may culminate as it seems to decline, and glow with a more resplendent radiance as it nears

the portal of immortality. There are elements of character that need the early frost to mature them into beauty; the disappointments and bereavements that one has encountered long before he bears the marks of venerable age are almost essential to the ripeness of the religious character. One never feels fully the need and worth of faith in things unseen and eternal till he has been made profoundly sensible of the frailty of all beside. There may indeed be vigorous principle, faithful duty, the earnest service of God and man; and this is the best part of religion, without which all the rest is worthless. But with the experiences of which I speak there comes in a tenderness of spirit, a power of communion with the unseen, a consciousness of continued fellowship with those who have passed on before us and with all that belongs to the spiritual world, a more distinctly heavenward aim and aspiration, a life that feels itself appertaining equally to the two worlds, and has its fading leaf tinged with hues caught from its familiar conversance with a higher sphere of being.

Though there is no trait of excellence which is forbidden to any, or is out of place in any age or condition, the ages as well as the estates of life have their special virtues. While the leaves are still green on the life-tree the active powers demand peculiar culture, and need to be energized by the

strenuous purpose of right, and by an aggressive spirit of conflict with every form of wrong and evil. The character may thus have its hopeful birth and growth, yet may not be filled in and rounded out with all that shall make it seem very near perfection. It may have the strength, but perhaps not yet the finished beauty of holiness. This, if not acquired before, must tint the leaves as they are beginning to fade, and may take on golden hues to replace the summer green. Gentleness, meekness, love-born courtesy, forbearance and long-suffering, the sense of spiritual realities that infuses itself into all scenes and objects, making common life sacred, common duties like an altar service, common enjoyments a perpetual thanksgiving, the delicate tracery which runs along with the thread of the daily life and gives a charm to what were else devoid of interest, — these, to be spurned by none, ought to be the ornament, the diadem, the crown of glory for the declining years, shedding over them the light of the resurrection morning and the unsetting sun, making the life seem incapable of dying, and giving more and more the consciousness of having already passed from death into life. If, then, with growing years we feel the fading of the leaf, a diminished power of active work, a loosened hold on the wonted objects of endeavor and ambition, we have here a

scope for activity no less vigorous and faithful than that of our youth or our prime, — one, too, in which we may do no less loyal and needful service to the world around us; for never did society need as now the example, the infusion of these gentler elements of character, to temper its fervid haste, to tone down its asperities, and to intenerate its hardness. Such ministries we have seen not infrequently among those who have wholly retired from the heat and burden of the day, yet have filled a no less conspicuous place and borne a no less essential part in the common life-work than when they were among the foremost in the career of honorable ambition.

Even under the heaviest burden of infirmity and suffering, there may be in the fading leaf only the richer glory. Patience and resignation, the peace of God and the clear vision of heaven, illumine many a chamber of chronic illness, many a couch of perpetual weariness and languishing. There are those who were never so lovely in the fullness of a God-inspired strength and unresting diligence as when they can only wait and suffer. Faith is never so queenly, hope never so sightlike, the Christian spirit never so rich in its every aspect and issue, as when the heavy hand of a mysterious Providence rests on one who had been true to the demands of active service, had taken for his watch-

word, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," and still hearing the same voice, responds: —

> "Cast as a broken vessel by,
> Thy will I can no longer do;
> Yet, while a daily death I die,
> Thy power I may in weakness show.
> My patience may thy glory raise,
> My speechless woe proclaim thy praise."

While some of the strongest spirits are thus disciplined, there are souls that never seem truly great till such trials are laid upon them. I have known those who had no conspicuous opportunities, — if they had had them, they might have been unequal to them, — those whose uneventful, prosaic walk commanded no stress of interest, — one knew that they were true and good, but their characters bore no strong marks and made no deep impression, — I have known such persons, who, when visited with prolonged infirmity, and under the shadow of impending death, have manifested a surpassing energy of spirit. Their lips, before sealed except to communings of no emphatic meaning, have been opened to the utterance of high spiritual thought, of fervent praise, of ecstatic hope. They have risen to the emergency; they have felt the throbbings of an immortal life beneath the dying flesh; they have watched the ebbing life-tide, have foreseen the close as it drew near, and met the final

call as with girded loins, knowing in whom they have believed, and assured that death cannot separate them from the love of God as revealed in the risen Redeemer. Such souls are witnesses for the faith they love. They strengthen the timid and the doubting. They diffuse a profound and vivid sense of the reality of the higher life, of the omnipotence of the gospel, of the certainty of its promises, of the Almighty arm beneath the sufferer, of the sufficiency of God's grace for the soul's severest stress and deepest need.

Others there are who first learn the blessedness of a religious trust when the leaf begins to fade. They have led, it may be, a not discreditable worldly life; but they have been so busy and care-cumbered, or so imbedded in ease and affluence, that they have hardly lifted a thought Godward or heavenward. But the early frost has touched the green branch, and they know for a certainty that it will never be green again. Shall its leaves merely wither and fall, or shall they clothe themselves in colors borrowed from the bow of heaven, which will not fade, but will bloom and glow into immortality? There are those in whom the check on the earthly life awakens every precious memory of early faith, recalls a devout mother's teachings, revives impressions that had seemed evanescent, quickens the dormant sense of a spiritual being,

calls forth the sincerest penitence for the years in which God has had so small a part, and leads the humbled soul to him whose words are, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Then the fading leaf grows beautiful. The stages of decline are rungs of the ladder from earth to heaven, on which descending angels meet with messages of good cheer the soul that is going home to God. Death is no longer the close, but the beginning of the career, and the blessings that rested on the days of busy and happy health are recalled, not with sorrow that they have ceased to be, but as tokens of a Love that will be with its child as he passes through the valley of the shadow of death, and pledges that he shall dwell in the house of God forever.

What I have said has not been merely an adaptation to the service of the sanctuary of the glory that covers the retreat of life from field and forest. I have used this retreating life to group around it what I have seen and known of what seem the darkest, yet are often the brightest portions of human experience. For many years of my life I was in constant conversance with such experiences, nor have I at any time been a stranger to them. There have been not a few whom I have been wont to see in suffering which death alone could terminate, yet have seen them only with a

conviction borne in upon me by my intercourse with them, which had no room to grow stronger, of the power of the world to come, of the sure foundation of those hopes that lay hold on eternity, of the presence of an Almighty Comforter, of the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus, "My peace I give unto you." That God is good we feel when everything smiles around and before us. Even more loudly does the echo ring from the scenes in which men cling to him as the All-in-all, and know that he is with them in the furnace of severest trial, — that, as the old prophet says, he "sits as a refiner and purifier of silver," and watches to see his own image mirrored from the metal's quivering surface.

We all do fade as a leaf, earlier or later, — some while the summer still lingers, some in the late frost of impending winter. But, through the vigor of an immortal hope, we need not wither in inglorious decline, but in the colors of the crimson dawn, which shall grow ever brighter till they are merged in the risen and perfect day.

SERMON XX.

THE ARITHMETICAL LAW OF COMBINATION.

"More in number than the sands of the sea." — Ps. cxxxix. 18.

Did it ever occur to you how absolutely numberless must have been the patterns of all fabrics of human art and skill, — carpets, room-papers, prints, porcelain, details of finish in furniture, fashions of jewelry? Every year brings its avalanche of novelties, rendering their predecessors obsolete, and yet there is no repetition. Go back to the first carpet ever woven, or the first calico ever printed, and follow the current of invention from year to year, — you will find no two styles alike except in general effect, and seldom even in that; and should the world last as many centuries as it has lasted years, and should the civilization of its latter days demand the same sorts of fabrics that we use, invention will be as fresh and unrepeating as now till the end of time. If you will suppose that a pattern-maker has at his command four or five different curves and three or four tints, the combinations that may be made of some or all of these simple elements are, if not literally more

in number than the sands, more numerous than man ever had the patience to calculate or the daring to conjecture. Then, too, with every curve or tint added to the number employed, the figures that would express the number of possible combinations would be vastly more than the previous number. In adding curves or tints, we should in a very short time have combinations far beyond our outside conception of infinity, — a number larger than we can present to our thought by any illustration or comparison; and with the curves and tints actually employed, for instance, in a carpet that we call unusually plain and simple, the possible combinations would very probably exceed the sands of the sea in number.

How easy then, you might say, must be the inventor's work! No, not by any means; for while there are uncounted numbers of combinations that may please the eye and gratify the taste, there are a myriad times as many that are unsightly; and you or I, if untrained, might experiment for centuries before we would alight on a combination that was barely passable. The chances of failure innumerably exceed those of success. All this pattern-making is the result, not of good luck, but of educated taste, trained eye, and practiced hand.

The universe happened out of chaos, say certain (so-called) philosophers. In the swirl of eddying

atoms, some impinged upon others, until permanent pairs, clusters, groups, were formed, which somehow blundered into life, and by happy successions of chances a portion of them developed higher modes of vitality; by still more happy chances, sprang into intelligence, superstition, religion; and at length, by the masterly throw of unloaded dice, came the supreme wisdom that can emancipate itself from religion and rejoice in a world without a God, — this last, as it seems to me, strangest of all, against which I should have thought the probability billions to one.

Let us look at this hypothesis of a godless world. There are about sixty elementary substances in our earth and its atmosphere. Were you to belt the solar system with figures, you could not express the number of possible combinations of two or more of these elements. But the greater part of these combinations would be of elements mutually incompatible, neutralizing, or destructive, — many of them such as would make extensive havoc where there were the beginnings of organic development. Suppose these elements fermenting in an ungoverned chaos, the utmost that we can conceive would be, here and there, now and then, a combination that might seem to have a future, sure, however, to be speedily whelmed by or in some clustering of uncongenial elements that would only

restore to chaos what had hardly emerged from its abyss.

But what do we see? A world stocked with organisms and inorganic compounds, each of which, to say the least, is as indicative of design as the pattern of a carpet or a wall-paper, that is, each of which has its apparent reason for being, in its capacity of enjoying or giving enjoyment, or in adaptations, relations, or uses which make it a part of an orderly whole. Nor do we find any combinations which look as if they had merely happened, — which have no reason for being, no place among the rest, no service to receive or to render. In a chance world, this last class would vastly outnumber all the others, if others there were; for, as I have shown, the probabilities of their existence are immeasurably greater. But not only are there unnumbered individual combinations that seem to have a reason for being; there are very many systems of combinations, entire departments of organized and inorganic existence, which, without any mutual causative relations, fit into one another as do the several parts of a skillfully constructed machine, supplying one another's deficiencies and needs, their very discords resolving themselves into staccatos or interludes in the universal harmony. In fine, the world is so made that the theory of design in the Creator is in accordance with spon-

taneous impression and first thought; and while the argument from design has been often misunderstood and illogically employed, in its fitting place and use it is out of the power either of sound reason or of sophistry to render it worthless, insignificant, or feeble.

Still farther, in the solar system there are many identities, proportions, and relations which denote a oneness of plan in the structure and motions of the planets and their satellites. Gravitation is said to account for them; but gravitation is itself to be accounted for. In a chance-made universe, there is the intensest improbability that bodies would act upon one another at such enormous distances. There are also harmonies and analogies in the planetary system which it is not even pretended that gravitation explains, and which therefore either happened or were designed. Laplace, a professed atheist, admitted that there is some inscrutable cause for these phenomena. He subjected them to mathematical calculation, and as to forty-three concurrent motions of planets and satellites, for which gravitation furnishes no assignable cause, he made the probability of their occurrence by chance to be one to four billions four hundred millions. Until some other efficient cause is discovered or imagined, I must regard these myriads against one as affording a strong presumption in behalf of an intelligent Creator.

A like calculus, with similar results, though, of course, only with approximate accuracy, has been extended to the stellar universe beyond our system, to the binary stars, to the drift of stars in space, and to the nebulous patches in the heavens.

In view of these harmonies multiplied beyond our count under our familiar view, and extended to the outermost bounds of telescopic vision, each of them having unnumbered probabilities against it in a chance world, even if I had not the faintest religious feeling or the feeblest craving for a God, my arithmetic and logic would compel me, however reluctantly, to believe in a Supreme Intelligence, all-wise, omnipotent. I should be an idiot to doubt it. Even did I say in my heart, "There is no God," my mind would belie my heart, — my reason would compel my faith.

The conception, indeed, of the Being mirrored alike in the wayside flower and in the majestic courses of the heavens is at best faint, feeble, inadequate, least adequate when most vivid. How, then, can we set limits to our gratitude that he has shown as much of himself as we can know, in him who bears his image in a form human while divine, revealed while veiled in a life on the earthly plane on which we tread, — in him, at once our brother and our Lord, offering himself equally to our familiar contemplation and love, and to our adoring admiration and reverence!

I have spoken of the numberless probabilities against the existence by chance of any individual portion of the universal order, and the multiple infinities of chances against any other hypothesis than that of the opening words of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." I want now to take an opposite route, and in other directions and spheres of thought to show certain infinities of combinations that are orderly, harmonious, fruitful, and of important bearing on human experience in this life and in the life to come.

We are never tired of nature, and how often do we feel, in looking on some scene that we call familiar, as if we had never seen it before! In all probability we never did see it before. The last beautiful autumnal sunset that you saw was as unique as it seemed to you. You never saw the like. The few lines and tints that made its glory were the same that you have often seen; but they are capable of more combinations than will outlast the world, and precisely the same has probably never presented itself twice since the dawn of creation. When I was a young man, I once spent six weeks in full view of Mount Washington and its allied summits, and every morning, as in a beatific vision of a world before unknown, I watched the play of wreaths and flecks of mist on the mountain

sides, and every morning the view was as fresh as it was wonderful; and so would Methuselah have found it, had he spent his nine hundred and sixty-nine years on the spot. Must not the like ever fresh wonder, glowing admiration, fervent gladness of soul, be ours in the life to come? As the multitude on the sea of glass, with the harps of God, sing, "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty," it is no traditional song of treasured beauty and remembered glory, but the outburst of adoration ever new, as the unmeasured kaleidoscope of creation flashes upon them combinations, orders, harmonies, splendors, unknown before and never to be repeated.

Our subject has its fruitful suggestions as to the inward life, the life of thought, feeling, and sentiment. The elementary thoughts in every department are comparatively few. If you analyze the literature of all times, you may trace the same underlying ideas and conceptions, simple, obvious, perhaps easily numerable. But their combinations are virtually infinite in number; and originality consists in new combinations, not in new elementary ideas. It is unexhausted and inexhaustible. There is as much of it in the great poets of our time as there was in Homer, in the great thinkers of our time as in Plato. To be sure, there is less of it in our current literature than of old,

because formerly only the impulse of genius made men authors, while now the existing mass of literature invites imitation, makes reproduction easy for those incapable of production, tempts mediocrity to court an ephemeral reputation by decanting old wine into new bottles which soon burst and perish. But to the end of time speculation, fancy, and poetry will leave in every generation names which will survive the ages, float down their current, and kindle inspiration as fresh and vivid as when glowing thoughts first found vent in burning words.

We have here the key to some of the phenomena of the religious life. There have been in all ages souls wrapt for years in contemplative devotion. There have been lives spent in the cloister, seemingly in constant and unwearied prayer, praise, introspection, and meditation on divine mysteries, and those who have been most absorbed in such themes have been the least weary of them. How is this? The elements of religious thought and sentiment are few, simple, easily rehearsed, to the undevout mind soon exhausted. But their combinations are manifold, exhaustless. They blend with one another in endless variety. They take new shapes in connection with the vast range of precept, example, and devotional utterance in the Scriptures, with the ever changing aspects of nature, with the ever new incidents of daily life. It is so with

prayer. He who prays never prays the same prayer twice; but the thoughts of supplication, thanksgiving, intercession, so intertwine themselves with one another and with fresh experiences that they are never repeated without variation, not even when there is an identity of form. The truly devout soul becomes attached to a liturgy, not because it is always the same, but because it is never the same, — because the sacred words bear with their repetition accumulated associations of previous seasons of prayer and praise, and take up into their substance something new from events still recent, or from the feeling of the present moment. The Lord's Prayer may be repeated daily for a lifetime, and, so far from becoming vapid, it shall mean more and more every time it is used, and may mean very different things, as special occasions, needs, infirmities, aspirations, give a special emphasis to one or another of the petitions.

Thus must it be in the higher life to come. The stereotyped conception of heaven is sometimes satirized as a perpetual psalm-singing. I believe it to be that and immeasurably more. But suppose it to be that alone, I can conceive that it need not be stale or wearisome. There are even in this world materials for a short eternity of lyric worship. The canticles of Holy Writ would not be soon

exhausted, and there is not one of them which would supersede any other; and when we had given them all their turn, we should only have an overflowing treasury of devout thought and feeling clustering around each of them, which would make us want to sing them again. Then as to the lyrics of the Christian ages, if you select those on any one theme that are really Christian poems, you will find no two of them alike, no one of them with which you would be willing to part, no one of them which would not awaken a special appetency for its own peculiar combination of sacred thought, poetical imagery, and hallowed association. I have a friend, in whose pure taste and religious feeling I have entire confidence, who intends to publish this winter a volume of Easter hymns. I doubt whether there will be one of them which will not present the few simple incidents of the resurrection in its own individual grouping, so that the volume, narrow as it may seem in its range, shall have no repetition, no hymn that shall seem one too many; but each of them will have thoughts, incidents, images, that will present the life newborn from the sepulchre in its own appropriate singing robes, and will wake its own peculiar throb of grateful joy in those who love to wait and worship at the place where the Lord lay. How must this rich diversity of earthly song become immeas-

urably richer in the strains that shall echo from the harps of the redeemed! Will it not be, not only a new song, but a song ever new, which they will sing as they ascribe "blessing and honor and glory and power unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever"?

Then when we blend in our conceptions of the higher life eternal praise and everlasting love, with the society of the blessed, with the ministries of mercy which may be theirs to their fellow-beings in God's vast universe, with the ever unfolding yet never to be unfolded mysteries of the Infinite Mind, can the life of heaven ever grow old, or repeat itself? Or, rather, have we not merely its faintest type and its feeblest foreshadowing in the words of the seer concerning the heavenly Jerusalem, "In the midst of the street thereof and on either side of the river was the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruit and yielded her fruit every month"?

SERMON XXI.

CHRISTIANITY AS OLD AS THE CREATION.

"The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." — Rev. xiii. 8.

About a century and a half ago there appeared in England, under the name of Matthew Tindal, a book entitled "Christianity as Old as the Creation; or, The Gospel a Republication of the Law of Nature." The book was regarded as hostile to Christianity, and probably was so intended. I never saw it, and know nothing of its contents. But I like the title. It expresses precisely what I believe Christianity to be.

A word or two about my text. The authorship of the Apocalypse has from early times been a subject of grave question. My own belief is that it was written by the author of the Fourth Gospel; for, very unlike as the two books are in aim and tenor, there are several striking coincidences in phraseology and conception. Thus, for instance, Jesus is spoken of under the figure of the lamb in these two books, and nowhere else in the New Testament. In both, the term Logos, or Word, is ap-

plied to Jesus, and nowhere else except in the first Epistle commonly ascribed to the same author. Moreover, the Fourth Gospel bears such manifest traces of having been written by an intimate friend of Jesus, who was present in the most important scenes which he describes, that I have no doubt that it was written by the Apostle John.

Both the Gospel and the Apocalypse must have been written in John's old age, probably many years later than the other books of the New Testament. He had thus had time which the other writers had not, to reflect on Christianity, not only as embodied in the teachings of its Founder, but as it was taking shape in the belief and life of its disciples. In the words of my text and in two or three passages in the Gospel, I cannot but think that he intended to voice the idea embodied in the title of Tindal's book. He means to say: "The manifestation of Infinite Love culminating and resplendent in the cross of Christ was nothing new. It represented no change in the administration of the spiritual universe. God did not then begin to be merciful, or begin to forgive sin, or place himself in any relation to man other than that which he had always borne. Everything meant or revealed by the dying Saviour is as old as the world is, as old as the throne of God, co-eternal with God."

On the other hand, Christianity has been often represented as a Divine afterthought, consequent on sin, a remedy for sin-sick souls, and not the vital atmosphere in which all pure and holy souls live and move and have their being, and in which the life of sin is not only abnormal, but death rather than life. It has familiar analogies in the realm of science. The circulation of the blood was no less a law of life before Harvey discovered it than it is now. Gravitation was none the less real when the morning stars first sang together than since the philosophy of the eighteenth century began to write out the rhythm of their song. So there is nothing which Jesus taught or manifested which is not true from eternity to eternity.

Another analogy. Scientific truth is revealed when men are ready for it; and of all the great truths of science there were foregleams, of all the great discoveries forerunners. So the truth taught by Christ came, not till, nay, in some respects even before, men were ready for it. There was no earlier time when religious truth could have been propagated, transmitted, and put within reach of all the more civilized portion of the human race, without multitudinous and continuous miracle. Meanwhile there were foreshinings of the true light, not in Palestine alone, but in Greece and Egypt, Persia and India; there were precursors

of the Messiah, not only in the Hebrew, but equally in the Gentile world.

Let us examine somewhat in detail the contents of the Christian revelation, that we may see more clearly how veritably they were a revelation, not a creation.

As regards the morality of the Gospel, you can name no principle or precept which has not its reason and its justification in the eternal right, — not one which is not founded on nature, on intrinsic fitness, — not one the obligation of which can be denied by any intelligent being, — not one which, apart from all idea of arbitrary reward or punishment, can be obeyed without benefit or violated with impunity. Wipe out all record and all knowledge of Christianity, and commission a being of infallible wisdom to write a code of morals for mankind, he would reproduce the Sermon on the Mount; and if he added to it, it would be such traits of transcending excellence as we read more distinctly in Christ's life than in his words. Not only are the ethics of the Christian code the directory for individual men, but equally for communities and nations, so that there has been real progress only in their direction. Nor is the law of Christ for man alone, or for this world alone. Heaven can have no other morality; if it had, it would not be heaven. Wherever there are beings

capable of choice and of will, Christ's law must be their law, if they would live in peace with one another, and would have the testimony of a conscience void of offense.

Most or all of you assent, I doubt not, to what I have now said. But when we make peculiar claims for Christ, it is alleged, in the first place, that the moral principles promulgated by him were not brought to light by him, — that there is hardly one of his precepts that cannot be found in the writings of the Greek, Roman, or Eastern philosophers, or in the Talmud. This is not, I think, quite true, yet it is almost true. Cicero got so far toward the precept, "Do good to them that hate you," as to write, "Never injure another unless he has first injured you." But admitting in full what is claimed for extra-Christian moralists, I would reply, If the moral laws which Christ gave are laws of nature and as old as the world is, it would have been unspeakably strange if they should not have been discovered in very early times, and recognized by wise men all along the ages. The peculiarity of Christ is, that he brought them all together, so that we find nothing lacking in his morality, while at the same time there is nothing that ought not to be there. According to the Mosaic cosmogony, there was light before the sun, errant daybeams, dimly and aimlessly struggling

through primeval mist and gloom; but for this none the less glorious was the orb which globed the scattered fires, and set bounds between the empire of light and of darkness.

It is said, in the next place, that we pay scanty homage to the Divine goodness when we maintain that this clear knowledge of what human duty must always have been was kept back for so many ages. I have already said that in one sense it came when the world was ready for it. But is there not a more important sense in which the world is not yet ready for it? How largely is it received and acted on? Of those who call themselves Christians, what proportion is there that show their faith by their works? Our business men own Christian morality as supreme and divine. Does it really give law in the shop, the office, the stock market? Nations call themselves Christian; but no nation has yet begun to adopt the law of Christ in its intercourse with other nations. We have heard much of the Christian character of the venerable emperor of Germany and of his prime minister. Do you suppose that Christ would have blessed their banners in the Franco-Prussian war, or would regard the military despotism under which Germany is permanently suffering as an institution of his school? England calls herself a preëminently Christian nation. Did she show herself so when

the majority of her prelates voted for the Afghan war, in order, as they said, that Christ might retain his supremacy in the East? Ours is styled a Christian people. Should we be willing to submit our claims to that designation to a commission composed of intelligent Indians and freedmen? Christ came none too late for human receptivity, — none too late for the world which will, I believe, at some still far-off epoch, be his kingdom, but where as yet his real subjects have not begun to win for him the ascendency which is his right and due.

I have spoken of Christian morality as so founded in the nature of things that there could have been no other morality. Christ could not have created a duty which was not of intrinsic right and obligation. Even our duty to him of reverence, gratitude, and trust rests on the same basis with our duties to other benefactors, self-sacrificing philanthropists, faithful teachers, and wise guides, though immeasurably exceeding all that we owe to the whole race of man beside, inasmuch as the benefits derived from him are our chief, supreme, and eternal good.

We turn now to the other end of the chain; for religion, in its true meaning, is binding, tying, or chaining, — that which holds God and man together. As to God's character and his relation to man, Christianity is a revealing or discovering, not

a creation. The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. There never was a time when God was not as full of compassion and mercy, as ready to forgive, as Christ's death showed him to be. Forgiveness is not a remission of the consequences of guilt; for they are natural, necessary, inevitable. It is the restoration of the divine approval and favor, — not of love; for that is not withdrawn, any more than that of the mother for her profligate child. Now forgiveness is intrinsically right. We regard it so between man and man. A man has injured me. He repents, is sincerely sorry, and has toward me an entirely different disposition from that in which he did me wrong. If I do not forgive him, that is, if I continue to feel toward him as if there had been no change in him, as perhaps I may, it will be solely because I am his fellow-sinner; for it is manifestly right that I should regard him, not as he was, but as he is. Now because God is perfect, and incapable of the passions which are man's imperfections, while he must look upon the really wicked as wicked, and therefore undeserving of his complacent regard, the sincerely penitent must of necessity be restored to his favor; for they deserve it. I know that Christ's death is still regarded by many Christians as God's reason for forgiving man's guilt. No one can place a higher value

than I do on Christ's services to man; but if it was necessary for him to suffer in order for God to forgive, God must have been by nature or by some antecedent necessity incapable of forgiveness. This I cannot believe, in the first place, because my conscience, in which I recognize the voice of God, tells me that forgiveness is intrinsically right in any and every being in the universe toward any and every other being; and, secondly, because, if God is perfect, he must be immutable, and therefore there can never have been a time when the death of Jesus, in the words of the well-known hymn, "turned the wrath to grace."

But here, again, we find that the revelation came none too late. Men, even under the clear teaching of Christ, have been amazingly slow to believe that God can freely forgive sin, of his own nature, because it is his "property always to have mercy." They must learn of Christ, themselves to forgive sin, must breathe in his spirit of forbearance and mercy, and embody it in their own lives, and then they can receive the revelation of God's free grace. So long as resentment and retaliation are the law of (so-called) Christian nations, and of vast numbers of men and women who call themselves Christians, the veil which Christ took away will be thrown again, and resolutely held down by the Church over the mercy-seat of the freely forgiving God.

If there is any truth in what I have now said, especially with regard to Christian morality, there are some prevalent notions and phrases that crave a moment's consideration.

We sometimes hear of a man's rejecting Christianity, as if it were a possible thing, and there are those, probably some here, who are not unbelievers, who really think that they are postponing all concern with it till some heavy affliction comes, or till they find themselves close under the shadow of death, or far along on the shady side of life. I do not see how this can be done. Can you reject the laws of your country or postpone obeying them, and yet remain here and go at large? It is vain for you to disclaim allegiance. The law has you in its grasp, and you can escape it only by self-exile. But Christian morality, if not a figment and imposture, is the law of the "land which the Lord your God has given you." It executes itself. You cannot evade it. You live under it, whether you mean to or not.

This leads me to speak of a phrase in common use, — I saw it named yesterday as the subject of a lecture to be delivered here this afternoon, — the experience of religion, — a good phrase, if rightly used; but it is commonly employed to denote, not the necessity of the many, but the privilege of the few. Now I know of no truth of more vital mo-

ment, of no thought that ought to be more impressive, than that our whole life-experience is a continuous experience of religion, — of its inevitable working, — if not of its blessings, of its penalties, — if not of its plaudit for the faithful servant and the obedient life, of its condemnation for the unused talent and the steward that can render no account to his master. What more truly religious experience is there than that of him who has worshiped only gods of gold, and whose whole life is lean and mean, who grows less as the years pass on, and still insatiably greedy, denies himself all the joy of earth, and shuts out from his soul every glimpse of heaven? Does not Christianity portray his experience when the Divine Teacher says, "What is a man profited though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Nor less truly religious is the experience of him who abandons himself to sensual indulgence, as his very soul becomes materialized, as the pleasure that he still craves loses its power of pleasing, and, in the decay of all that made him more than the brutes that perish he has within, and no less in his outer man, the record of Holy Writ, "The wages of sin is death."

My friends, we cannot help experiencing religion. Be ours, then, the experience of its promises progressively realized in the life that now is, and still to unfold new richness of blessing and glory all along the ages of eternity.

SERMON XXII.

STUMBLING STONES.

"A stone of stumbling." — ISAIAH viii. 14.

"A STONE of stumbling," — an obstacle in the centre of the straight highway, blocking the traveler's path, and seemingly impassable. He who goes forward blindly will stumble upon it, will lose his balance, and will have a fall more or less disastrous. There are, however, beside this, two alternatives. One may crawl round it, may waste time, strength, and spirits, and, if there are other like obstacles looming up before him, may lose heart for further progress, and stray off into side-ways, which look smooth, but have snares and pitfalls instead of stumbling stones. Or one may climb it, surmount it, that is, mount upon it, stand on top of it, where there is a more bracing air, a clearer outlook and onlook, while the extensor muscles have gained vigor in the climb, and are in all the better condition for an ascending progress and for other obstacles as they may be encountered.

Our appointed lifeway is an ascending path, — upward if we would have it onward. There are

obstacles on it, mercifully placed there to train and exercise our best powers of mind and heart, none of them insurmountable, though some of them are steep and rough in the climbing. It is for us to choose whether we will stumble on them, crawl round them, or surmount them, and our destiny is contingent on our choice.

Among the obstacles, temptations are the most obvious in the way of many, — no less real and inevitable in the way of those whom we call the untempted; for in the most sheltered home-life, and in society that seems to lie entirely out of the shadow of evil, there is no little of wrong-saying and wrong-doing under the sanction of example, custom, or fashion, which conscience may ignore, but cannot justify or palliate. At the same time, we who account ourselves as separate from sinners are often under the strongest temptation to sins of negligence and omission; and very many to whom the words of our confession, "We have done those things which we ought not to have done," seem a superfluous form, need close self-scrutiny and ought to bow in sincerest self-humiliation as they say, "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done."

As to what are commonly called temptations, such as are encountered by boys and men in early life, though seldom by women in a prosperous condition, the only safety is in surmounting them. The re-

maining alternatives are in most cases equally fatal. The choice between them is generally a mere question of time ; and if one is going to ruin, it matters very little to him how fast he goes, and the faster, the less harm he does and to fewer persons. For those who stumble and fall on the first temptation to dishonesty or to vicious self-indulgence, self-recovery is indeed possible, but only by profound self-abasement and the most heart-probing penitence. For the greater part of them, the wrong that they have done seems to them very much less wrong, nay, almost right, because it is they that have done it. As I have said here and elsewhere so often that I should be ashamed to say it again, were it not at once the most important and the most neglected truth in practical morality, one's own example is of immeasurably more importance to him for good or for evil than all the moral precepts that were ever uttered or written, and all the examples that were ever set. He who stumbles once has seldom any objection to stumbling again, and as often as there is a stumbling stone in his way, till he is mortally crippled and maimed in soul, and it may be in body too.

But there are many who crawl round the obstacle. They will not do the thing that they are tempted to do, but they will do the thing nearest to it that they can call by a name not utterly bad (as,

for instance, when a young man, instead of stealing outright, clandestinely borrows). They will get as close as they can to the border-line between right and wrong, where they can look over into the forbidden territory and brood upon it, and wish that the line, instead of running straight, would curve out a little here and there. And then they will stray timidly over the line into some path which seems to run just outside of it, and diverges from it at so acute an angle that they keep it in sight for a while, then unawares lose sight of it, see no way back, and so flounder on to utter perdition. This is with sad frequency the history of crimes of embezzlement and peculation. I think that we all have known men who seemed not aware that they had ceased to be saints till they were arraigned as criminals.

But the surmounting of the first severe temptation is a most memorable epoch, to be looked back upon with fervent gratitude. For one has to bring into intense action every sinew and muscle of the inner man, and that action is development. It creates strength that outlasts present need, and is in reserve to make the next obstacle, however steep and high, easier to be surmounted. Then, too, he who has thus trampled Satan under his feet has a serener and brighter onlook and uplook, is nearer heaven, in a purer sky, and with a conscious benediction from his God and his Saviour.

All that I have said applies with equal force to the less conspicuous sins of speech and deed, as to which we must either yield to them, compromise with them, or surmount them, the latter only, without lowering our character, impairing our usefulness, and blending such virtues as we may possess with faults that tarnish their lustre, and even threaten their continued existence.

I want to speak even more emphatically of our sins of omission. Here duty is the stone of stumbling, — the obstacle in the way of progress. There are a thousand things which we ought to do, yet which it is much easier not to do. There is the work belonging to our calling, profession, or home-life; there are kindnesses and charities; there are services demanded by this and that social or public interest, — an amount that often looms up before us very threateningly, yet as to no part of which can we get rid of a sense of obligation. There are those who stumble at once. They have no hesitation to neglect entirely much of what they perceive to be incumbent upon them, and they are known and know themselves to be idlers, loiterers, often obstructive cumberers of the ground which they occupy. These, however, are few.

For us who have many claims upon us, the danger is that we creep round these obstacles of close-besetting duty instead of facing them fairly, and

vigorously surmounting them. We half do the things which we are unwilling to leave wholly undone. We do superficially what we ought to do thoroughly. We postpone kind deeds with fair words, and with promises which we mean, but never find time, to keep. We give our names where active effort is due. To-day there are calls upon us which we put off till a morrow that never comes. All this is, at the outset, with the best intentions, with the will to be true, helpful, and useful to the utmost of our ability, yet still with an undue love of ease, and a reluctance to set aside our own passing convenience or pleasure. This tendency, once yielded to, grows upon us, till we become incapable of thorough work, are trustworthy only in part, are insincere without knowing it, and have procrastinated duties and obligations so piled up as to make a higher obstacle than we can possibly surmount.

Our only true course is to surmount these obstacles, one by one, as we reach them, never to let them accumulate, never to permit them to become piled up. Every duty has its fit moment, and if postponed, it must be either dropped, slighted, or suffered to displace some other duty. The rule should be: Do faithfully and finish thoroughly the work in hand, the work of the day or hour, and let your daily path have, for the blocks of its ascending pavement, duties surmounted, on which at night-

fall you may look back and down with a clear conscience, and then turn for the morrow, with ever more elastic vigor, to those which rise before you, to you not stones of stumbling, but successive steps and stages on your way to heaven.

Not only in essential duty, but in every aim or pursuit, whether of scholarship, or of professional success, or of any worthy object of ambition, there are stones of stumbling, obstacles to be encountered and surmounted, and they are not hindrances, but helps, — the more of them and the steeper, the loftier will be the summit attained. The world often marvels at what it calls self-made men, who seem to have birth, position, surroundings, everything, against them, and it is commonly said that they became what they are in spite of the obstacles in their way. In point of fact they became what they are by means of those obstacles. The stones of stumbling were their stepping stones, on which they rose as they went on ; and but for those stones they would never have risen above, hardly to, mediocrity. I have before me to-day young persons who have their ambitions, as students, as destined for some honorable profession or calling, or as in training for some social position of more or less commanding influence. My young friends, you will have your obstacles at the outset, hard things to learn or to do, difficult problems to master, skill

to acquire, knowledge which you can make your own only by patient and sometimes disappointing and baffling effort. Leave these things undone, you will merely vegetate, not live. Slight them, and the greater your seeming success at the beginning, the more certain and fatal will be your ultimate failure. On these early steps there are obstacles which you can surmount, and which you must surmount, if you would get a firm foothold, and maintain a sure progress, in any walk of life where there is need of intelligence, knowledge, and trained ability.

Among our stones of stumbling I of course cannot but lay strong stress on afflictions, which we all who reach mature years must encounter, and which, I cannot doubt, when we shall look back upon them from heaven, we shall account, as we try to think them now, as the merciful appointments of a benignant Providence. But it rests with us whether we will make them so. We may stumble upon them and fall. We may let them darken for us all that remains of life, so that it shall be passed as under the shadow of death. But such is the native elasticity of the human soul that few succumb thus hopelessly. Our danger is that we creep around these obstacles rather than stumble upon them; that we let fresh scenes, engagements, and hopes occupy and distract us,

suppress or drive out sad memories, and leave us, though really maimed and crippled as to this lower life, with no stronger hold on the life above and beyond, nay, with a worldliness the more earthy because we neglected the heavenward call with which God voiced our trial or sorrow. But we may surmount these obstacles, and ascend over their summits to the mount of clear vision, where we can behold the gems and jewels of the amaranthine crown reserved for us, transcending the wealth of worlds upon worlds; the place among the chosen children of God before which all earthly success and honor dwindle into insignificance; the home in the Father's house on high, where our dearest await us with their welcome, where the family will be unbroken, and the farewell will never be uttered.

"These are they which came out of great tribulation," is said in prophetic vision of those nearest the throne, first in song, clad in raiment pure and white as the coronation robe of their Lord and Saviour. Nor is this blessedness without its earthly foreshining. We certainly have known among our saints here below those who have climbed where they stand over loss, disappointment, shattered hopes, broken fortunes, manifold bereavements; and every stumbling stone of trial and sorrow in their way, as they have surmounted it,

has brought them nearer to the Pisgah from which, across the death-river, they can see the promised land in all its beauty and glory. Such are they who realize with St. Paul, himself their type, what it is to be "as having nothing, yet possessing all things."

Let it not be forgotten that it is in the surmounting of obstacles that we are specially the followers of Jesus Christ. It is this that made him great, that gave him the primacy among the sons of God, the name above every name. But for this he might have led a blameless life, yet we should never have heard of him. He might have quietly served his generation in some small way, but would have wielded no influence beyond his time, would have left no example for the world's guidance and salvation. He had to encounter every obstacle of birth and position. Born in a manger, of the lowliest parentage; brought up in an obscure village of a despised province, remote from any centre of culture or influence; with no friends except poor and unlettered artisans and fishermen, — human, however richly endowed; susceptible of all human infirmities, and with a will-power that might have been curbed and deadened by hindrances that seemed insuperable, — on those very stones of stumbling he rose to the consciousness of a position in which multitudes might hang upon his words, and

the champions of stupid traditions tremble at his iconoclastic might. He knew what he was, — all that he might be and do. Then came the temptation so to use his conscious capacity of influence and power of action as at once to free his people from the Roman yoke, and to earn for himself, from their well-merited gratitude, wealth, rank, and fame. The stones of stumbling towered mountain-high on his way, and there was ample room for him to creep round them, with no trespass upon the absolute right, under shelter of patriotic loyalty, and with every selfward motive to seek a kingdom of this world. For forty days and nights in the wilderness he kept in sight the pile of jagged rocks before him, which he could climb only with torn hands and bleeding feet, and the smooth, easy way round it by which he could creep into favor and grovel into eminence. He made the irrevocable choice. He stood on a summit with all that the world could give beneath him, — on a summit indeed, but only at the base of those loftier heights which he had seen in remoter vision. Now close at hand are a homeless life, weary days, nights of lonely watching, treacherous friends, enemies on every hand, the scorn and hatred of men in place and power, Herod and Pilate, Jew and Gentile, else at strife, made one for his destruction; and high above all, in ever clearer view, the mount of Cal-

vary, the cross of shame and agony, the bitter, ignominious death. But to his eye the heavens are opened, and from the cleft sky there sink into his soul the words of God, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and from every depth of his inmost being goes forth the response, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God." On and up he pursues his unhalting way, at every step overcoming, surmounting the world, till from the cross he rises to the right hand of God, to the throne of redeemed humanity, before which in the fullness of time every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess him to be Lord, and whence come to each of us his words: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

SERMON XXIII.

THE FEEBLE MEMBERS NECESSARY.

"Those members which seem to be more feeble are necessary."—1 Cor. xii. 22.

The least things are worth as much as the greatest; for the greatest are worthless without them. The failure of a single pin or pivot may arrest the working of the most efficient machinery. Shipwreck has been caused by the omission of a single bolt. The invention that will revolutionize the world's industry is a mere chimæra of the scientific brain, till it can be actualized by the nice adjustment of the minute and to the careless eye insignificant accessories that shall put it in play. Watt's great invention, without which the steam-engine could not have come into industrial use, was dormant in his brain for fourteen years, and nearly perished there, simply because Glasgow, where he then lived, could not furnish certain essential yet lowly forms of operative skill.

Equally in human society the feeblest and least conspicuous members are necessary, and without their coöperation the greater are powerless. How

many are the humble yet indispensable functions that must be discharged faithfully and well, in due time and in full measure, in order that interests of prime importance may not languish and suffer! It is so in government. Fill the highest places with men of consummate ability and excellence; all the good that they can do may be more than neutralized by the stupidity or corruption of their subordinates. It is so in our industries. The operations of our great merchants and manufacturers are sustained and fed by numerous subsidiary arts and trades of obscure and lowly men and women. It is so in every department of intellectual labor. Great minds are often trained and furnished for their work by agencies unknown to fame; the materials which they shape, illumine, and glorify are accumulated by sublustrous or opaque intellects; their theories are verified or their discoveries applied by minds of a far inferior order; and there is not a field of science or literature that would not remain barren but for the patient toil of those who, as mere journeymen or day-laborers, receive but scanty returns for the harvest which they make ready for the reaper.

Now this is the order of society ordained by the Divine Providence. Writers on natural theology have sought to demonstrate the hand of God in creation by dwelling on the distribution of the ele-

ments of man's material well-being. I agree entirely with them ; but I trace with much higher satisfaction the Divine Providence in the distribution of abilities and proclivities among men, so that there are those who by their very nature are fitted for the various positions that need to be filled, and for those alone. It would be a world sadly out of joint, and probably incapable of holding together, if men were as much alike in their capacities as lions, tigers, sheep, or oxen. The very subsistence of society requires an enormously wide diversity of powers and adaptations, and for every place and grade in the social scale we find the needed proportion of those fit for it, no more, no less. In the machinery of society there are the many that are fit to be only pivots or bolts, the few that are foreordained to be mainsprings and driving wheels. Of those who are capable of governing the state, conducting extended operations, swaying the minds and hearts of multitudes, filling the foremost places of society, advancing the boundaries of knowledge, becoming creative spirits in literature and art, there are as many as the world needs, can utilize or can enjoy ; yet in no time or land is there a wasteful overplus of superior ability. To one who has the ten talents, there are a score who have five, — hundreds, nay, thousands, who have but two or one ; and while we sometimes see an ambition that tran-

scends ability, the very fact that such cases attract emphatic observation shows that they are rare. Most men have aims commensurate with their capacities, fall spontaneously into the niches that they can fill.

Then, again, for work which to most men would seem utterly distasteful and repulsive, Providence raises up men who not only can do it, but take the utmost delight in doing it. For instance, such needed literary labors as the making of dictionaries, concordances, indexes, statistical tables, to most men who are capable of making them seem the most dreary drudgery; ninety-nine out of a hundred would shrink with loathing from such an occupation to be continued for months or years. Very probably there is not one of you here to-day who would consent to a life devoted to such work. Yet Providence has raised up and endowed men who rejoice in it, and would not be willing to do anything else. Cruden, who made the Concordance of our English Bible which many of you probably own, found in this occupation the only relief from mental depression which sometimes lapsed into insanity; and but for his profound interest in this work of what might seem the most tedious detail, the greater part of his life would have been passed in the wards of a lunatic asylum. Our countryman, Allibone, when at work on his voluminous

Dictionary of Authors, sought amusement during a summer vacation in making an alphabetical index of three huge octavo volumes. Such things may indeed awaken a smile; but they are much better adapted to call forth our gratitude to Him who, in the native tastes and inevitable proclivities of our fellow-men, has provided for the necessities which would else remain unsupplied.

Such, then, is the constitution of human society, — a vast diversity of offices and ministrations, with a corresponding diversity of tastes and fitnesses; many members, each with its own function, but all alike essential, those that seem to be more feeble necessary, as is the eye to the foot, or the ear to the eye, or the hand to the ear.

What are the lessons to be derived from this providential order?

First, that we be contented, each with and in his place. There is no one who might not conjure up reasons for discontent, and none with better right than those who are in what are called the best places. For is there not always a better to which they might aspire? Some of the most utterly discontented people that I have ever known have been among those who to almost every one might have appeared objects of envy; and men have died bitterly disappointed, nay, have evidently died of disappointment, when to all but themselves they seemed

at the summit of fame, and when they were little short of the summit of position.

But what possible reason can I have for discontent with my place, whatever it be? If I cannot be great in it, I shall be smaller out of it. One is much more of a man in a position which he can fill respectably and honorably than in a position beyond his capacity and culture. I can at least be useful in my proper calling, and usefulness is in itself supremely honorable, not only in the sight of God, but equally in the esteem of all whose esteem is worth having. Then, too, there is no position in which one may not be constantly growing in all that constitutes a worthy character. There is no work into which a man cannot put all of mind, soul, and strength that he has, and make that all the greater by diligence and faithfulness. Beside, what are these distinctions of great and small? They are only surface-deep. How does all that seems to us great dwindle in comparison, not only with the Infinite Spirit, but with what earth-born angels that we have known already are in heaven, and with what we may hope to be if we are fit to join them! On the other hand, what right have we to call anything small that is necessary to the commonwealth of living souls? The one question for me is not, How does my place rank on any unauthoritative scale? but, Is it my place? Am I

fitted for it? Is it that in which God would have me serve him? I can trust his careful love in his disposing of me. I can have no doubt that he has a blessing for me in the lot which he has ordained for me, and that I should forfeit that blessing by leaving my post. Then, too, though I be a feeble member, I bear my part in what the strong and great accomplish. They cannot do without me so well as I can do without them. If they are the eye, I am the hand or the foot, and the eye sees to no purpose unless it can reach what it sees, or move where the way is open to its vision. Is mine the one talent? Still it is a talent, golden, precious, and I shall lose it if I unsphere myself, while I can make it two, five, or ten, if I content myself with doing with my might what God would have me to do.

Another lesson is that of mutual respect, a lesson needed equally by the higher and the lower in position and capacity, — by the higher, that they suppress both pride and vanity, — by the lower, that they purge themselves of envy and jealousy. The only claim to respect grows from one's fidelity and serviceableness in his place or office, whatever it be. If I cannot create in art or literature, I can enjoy to the full what others create, and shall I not thank God that he has made them capable of thus ministering to me, and hold them in untempered

esteem, honor, and gratitude for their work's sake? Or if I occupy what seems a privileged position, shall I not hold in the kindest regard, and cherish as essential members of the body of which I am but a member, those whose thousand humbler ministries alone enable me to fulfill mine, and but for whose services I must forsake my own place without being fit for theirs? Nay, if they are true to their calling, are they not exercising a spiritual ministry for me by which I ought to be inwardly enriched and ennobled? Have I not among them great examples in their truth and honor, in their industry and promise-keeping, in their cheerful endurance of privation and hardship, often in virtues and graces only the more resplendent because they borrow no lustre from their setting, but shine in their own pure light? I can say for myself that, in the highest of all learning, that which appertains to spiritual culture and to the immortal being, my best teachers have been those in the most obscure condition, to whom I have gone as their official teacher and guide in spiritual things, but have found our offices reversed, and have come away laden by them with the very gifts which it seemed my province to bestow.

Social distinctions there must indeed be; for community of culture and surroundings, of position and employment, must of necessity create affinities

which separate while they unite. The intimate association of those whose modes of life are widely different would be fatal to the comfort and happiness of all concerned, and especially of those who might seem to be the chief beneficiaries of such intercourse. Yet in a right-minded community these groups exist side by side with no inhospitable exclusiveness, with only the warmest welcome for those whose improved culture or condition may change their social relations, and with the mutual recognition of one another's honored place, equivalent worth in the social economy, and equal claims to consideration in all common concerns and interests. The attempt to import into our republican society the broad and impassable barriers between class and class which have no other basis than the exploded fiction of hereditary right, and to flank those barriers by superciliousness on the one hand and abjectness on the other, is as irrational as it is un-Christian. It is leze-majesty against the Divine Providence, which in necessitating mutual services has enacted as their essential complement reciprocal and common rights and obligations, and has made both contempt and envy as unfitting and absurd as between hand and foot or eye and ear.

One lesson more. Christianity makes of this world but the training school for a larger and higher sphere of being. What that sphere may be

or furnish, how like or unlike the present, we cannot know. Of this, however, we are assured, that there are great places there for all who are fitted for them, — high posts of service for all who are worthy of them. This, too, we know, — that fidelity, serviceableness, loyalty to God and love to man, are the qualities which will place us among the chief and the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

But in order thus to prepare ourselves for a place in heaven, we must each of us have his or her place here on earth. Providence has in many instances determined our places for us. But there are those who, without cares of family or of business, seem not unsphered, but non-sphered. Now it is precisely these whose fit place is in ministering to the needs of depressed, ignorant, suffering, vicious humanity. They ought to regard themselves as the light infantry of the sacramental host, ready for prompt and active service under the Captain of their salvation, ready to take and hold such posts of duty as may best advance his cause and reign. I rejoice to know how many there are in this city and in this congregation who deem such philanthropic work their privilege even more than their duty.

Finally, whatever your place here, whether fixed for you by Providence, or chosen with reference to

the divine will, regard it as your special forecourt of heaven, — as the post of service in which, being what you are, you can the most surely and amply fit yourself for an honored charge among those who serve God in the unveiled light of his upper sanctuary, where, to every one who has wrought his Lord's work under the cloud and behind the veil of obscurity, modesty, or self-abasement, it shall be said, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things."

SERMON XXIV.

TRUE WEALTH.

"As having nothing, and yet possessing all things." — 2 Cor. vi. 10.

Though Paul wrote in Greek, he was a Roman citizen, and familiar with the state of things in the Roman empire, under whose law the distinction between possession and ownership was real, and gave rise to conflicts that often threatened destruction and issued in revolution in the body politic. Large numbers of people possessed lands which they did not own; for possession meant occupancy and use, not ownership. I may own what I do not possess; I may possess what I do not own: and possession is of much more importance to me than ownership; for ownership may be out of my power; possession never is. Moreover, what I own may make me want to own more without enabling me to obtain it; while I can increase my possessions as fast as my capacities and cravings grow. Of the havers there are many who have never been possessors; of the possessors, many who have never been havers; and many again who have never attempted to possess till they had lost what

they had. Neither of these classes are our best witnesses. But there are those who have been larger havers, and great possessors too, and they, I think, have always enjoyed possessing rather than having, insomuch that they have not infrequently sacrificed large portions of what they had that they might possess the more. Let us look at some of the items of the wealth which we may possess without having, — at some, I say; for the full catalogue it would take a lifetime to rehearse, since to him who can take to himself Paul's words, "Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's," it is said with truth, "All things are yours."

First, all nature may be our possession, and is so, when we are in communion with the incorruptible Spirit that is in all things, when the smile of God beams upon us from the heavens, his voice comes to us on the waters, his breath is wafted to us in the fragrance of spring and summer, his bounty makes our souls rich and glad in the mellow beauty and the harvest wealth of autumn, his might and majesty awaken high thoughts in the awful grandeur of winter; when every phasis of creation reveals to us his wealth of beauty, his kindly providence, the vastness of his omnipotence, the mysteries of his wisdom, the immeasurable height and depth and fullness of his love. So far as I can take in this or any part of it with adoring rever-

ence and with the fervor of a child's heart, it is all mine. Whoever calls it his, the usufruct, the revenue, is mine.

Equally is ours the divine inspiration that there is in art. The great works that make the world so much the fitter home for man are none of them private or corporate property. They belong not to this gallery or to that church, but to every soul that can take them in, and can feel in them their more than human grandeur or loveliness of conception, can trace in them the divine archetypes of which they are copies. How can we adequately prize the capacity of permanent possession and the perpetual revenue of what in nature or in art we have seen but once, — the photographic and presentific power of memory, which makes a mountain, a waterfall, a picture, a statue, a cathedral our lifelong property, renewing for years and years the freshness of admiring, adoring thought with which we first beheld it! How rich we grow with these treasured experiences, with the numberless slides of the magic lantern, some lingering for hours on the field of sight, others gliding rapidly over the retina, yet with always clear and beatific vision!

Then too, in humanity, are not all the great and good of our race ours? Ours they are when they feed our thought, when they enrich our imagination, when they stir us to noble purpose and

endeavor, when they cherish our love, enlarge our charity, lift our souls on the wings of their devotion, breathe into us their gentleness and sweetness, awake in us a generous emulation, present to us patterns of excellence by which we may train our spirits and make our lives true and beautiful, meek and kind, benevolent and philanthropic. They are ours all the more because death has made them immortal, because from shining lights on earth they have become stars in the upper firmament, where they can be seen by every eye, and may be guiding luminaries on the way which all may tread. What an unspeakable blessing is it, too, that there are not a few such whom we have known and still know, who have seemed to us hardly to need the consecration of death to make them fixed stars in the heaven of our reverence and love! How truly have all such, the living and the dead, been ours because they were Christ's and God's! Our revenue from them we should term precious beyond all estimate, did they not point and lead us to the all-perfect Saviour, who made them what they were, and whom it is ours to possess in ever growing fullness, if we will mark the steps by which he passed on to heaven, and follow him "whithersoever he goeth."

Ours in possession, also, is or ought to be the vast sum of human happiness. For this is a happy

world, immeasurably happy, with all the exceptions and abatements that we can number. Even under what seems to us perpetual cloud and shadow there is in man a power of adaptation, an elasticity of spirit, which probably gives a preponderance of pleasurable sensations to almost every human life; while on how many lives in every condition, the shadows, however deep, are transient, the clouds have golden rifts! How many within our familiar knowledge are the happy homes, the successful and honorable lives, the youth of glad promise, the men and women in their genial and glorious prime, those serenely happy in old age, those for whom the sunset of the earthly life is consciously the dawn of heaven! All this happiness is ours. Imagine, if you can, a prosperous, painless, affluent life, with different surroundings, — yourself alone in the sunshine, all but yourself and your own home in rayless gloom, — could the sunbeams cheer or warm you? Would not the misery around you make you wretched? There is not a glimpse of joy on another's countenance that kindles not in you an answering joy. There is not in your circle a happy home that does not make your own home the happier. Even in your disappointments and sorrows you have comfort in living in a happy world. In your bereavements it is your consolation that there are unstricken households around you, — that there

are voices of health and gladness that can break in upon your grief. Happy, thrice happy, is it for us that we are so members of one body, that we do sincerely sorrow and rejoice with one another; for the balance is incalculably on the side of joy. We indeed note and remember the moments of painful sympathy, and this, precisely because they are the exceptions and not the rule, and even they are not without their revenue of satisfaction, if not of gladness. Our fellow-feeling, with the comfort it has imparted, with the kinship of spirit which it has created, with the closer friendships to which it has given birth, is among the last experiences which we would part with, among the memories which we would gladly treasure for the blessedness to come, when we may look back together on all earthly sorrows as we do on troubled dreams when we wake in health and gladness.

Still more, our capacity of beneficence may enlarge and accumulate our possessions by a sum to which no day should fail to witness an increase. It has been well said, "What we give we keep;" and there is nothing else that we are sure of keeping. There is a felt possession, a sense of permanent property, in whatever happiness we have created. I knew, and so did some of you, a man in this city, among the very richest of his time, who for many years was cut off by bodily infirmity from

all of what are commonly called the enjoyments of life,—from almost all use for his own personal benefit of the property of which he had the ownership. He never sat at his own table. He weighed the stale bread which was the only food that he dared to take, and of that he dared not to take enough to appease his incessant hunger. He could give himself absolutely no indulgence in which the mortal frame was needed to bear a part. Yet I never knew a happier man; for he made it his life-work to create happiness, to inquire into need and distress, to send relief to the destitute, to gladden poverty-stricken homes, to lighten the burdens of age and infirmity, to make children's eyes dance and their hearts leap. It always seemed to me that he realized spiritually the brutal wish of the imperial glutton, that he had a thousand mouths to feed with. I am sure that he fed every day with gladness and thanksgiving at more tables than he could count, that he was warmed by the fires that he kindled on else cheerless hearths, that there was not a gift of his that was not as truly a godsend to himself as to the recipients of his bounty. With all his wealth, he was constrained to be as one having nothing; yet he was as one possessing all things.

Possessions of this kind are always within our reach. The opportunities for doing good are in-

cessant in our waking hours, co-extensive with our social lives. We may or may not have what are called large means of beneficence. The rule for us must be that of the ancient book, "Be merciful after thy power. If thou hast much, give plenteously. If thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little; for so gatherest thou thyself a good reward in the day of necessity." But we all have large means of beneficence, unless we ourselves are pitifully small; for we ourselves are our most ample means of beneficence. Our whole social life may be coined into utilities, not, to be sure, all of it into pounds or talents, but — what is of even more importance — into mites and farthings of considerate and unceasing kindness. We are never in one another's society without throwing off continually proof impressions of ourselves. There is a perpetual effluence of such temper, such spirit as is within us. Then, too, we are constantly with recipient souls that take from us what will make them happier and better, if we are truly meek and kind and generous. And how many there are to whom in our intercourse little things are great! In our own households we may diffuse untold happiness by the unselfish spirit which is always ready to concede and slow to claim. Among our friends and our casual associates costless courtesy, unstudied kindness, the tone of intercourse designated

in the phrase, "in honor preferring one another," may be a perpetual ministry of peace, harmony, and gladness. There are always those whom kind words, even a kind look, may cheer and encourage, may sometimes ease of pressing burdens, of incipient despondency, — an influence which, I suppose, we all have felt and should therefore never be slow to impart. There are little children whom a mere smile or the slightest token of sympathy will gladden. There are the weary, sad, infirm, dispirited, to whom we may carry brightness from our own happier condition. There are those whom we can counsel, warn, strengthen in the right, help over steep and rough passages in their way. Now it is no mere figure of speech, but we shall find it a blessed experience, that all that we do for others remains ours, our possession for life, our possession for eternity.

In all these ways we may possess, even though we have not; and if we have, what we thus possess is more truly and enduringly ours. The time is not far for any of us, for some no doubt very near, when we shall have nothing; for as we brought nothing into this world, it is certain that we can carry nothing out of it. For that day God grant that we be written among those, though "having nothing, yet possessing all things."

SERMON XXV.

OUR IGNORANCE OF THE FUTURE.

"Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." — Prov. xxvii. 1.

How true this is there is no need of saying, and though knowledge as to everything else has grown, and in many departments exact science has replaced ignorance or conjecture, these words are as true now as when they were written; nay, the future of each individual is less calculable than then, and the variables that cannot be foreseen are more numerous. Yet it might have been otherwise, and would, I believe, were there not a distinctly and intentionally providential element in human life. Science and skill loose the seals and read the future of things once deemed inscrutable; and were man under no other government than automatic material laws, casting his horoscope and predicting his fortune would not be an exploded superstition, but a problem capable of exact solution. Moreover, the Supreme Being might have made our future calculable. We can conceive of a system under which we should know all that awaits

us of good or evil, so that there should be no happiness beyond or aside from our expectation, no sorrow that was not preceded by its admonishing shadow. But I want to show you, as I feel, how largely we are indebted to the unexpectedness of events for all that makes life worth living.

In the first place, this unexpectedness adds immeasurably to our happiness, both by what it saves us from and by what it bestows. It is no fiction that the severest trials and heaviest sorrows are more grievous in the anticipation than in the endurance. The cup, when it is put to our lips, is mingled for us with reliefs, consolations, hopes. When we seize upon it before it is ready for us, we have its unmixed bitterness. But we can seldom thus anticipate it. Either calamity or grief comes upon us suddenly, or if it looms before us, we dwell more on the possibility of its passing over than on what it will be if it comes, and till the last moment we are beguiled by hopes, unreal indeed, yet not unfounded, as they are based, not on outward circumstances, but on the very constitution of mind and soul that God has given us. Then when we can hope no longer, we find the burden or sorrow fully as heavy, indeed, as we could have expected had we clearly foreseen it; but we have sympathy, comfort, and help from Heaven and from the friends that Heaven gives us in an affluence which we could not have foreseen.

Then as to positive enjoyment, it is very certain that we derive more happiness from imagination than from experience. The vision, when realized, has lost its roseate hue, its silver lining, its fringes of gold. We borrow from the future much more than it will ever pay. We base upon its possibilities an expanded currency, of which we have the use, but which it never redeems. We are poets, makers, creators, all our lives long, and the material of our poetry is the dim and vague, but always rich and bright prospective of coming years or days. It is real in the most intimate sense; we feel it, we enjoy it, we are enriched by it; we incorporate it into the substance of our being; it gives tone to our characters. Without this creative, poetic faculty and habit, a man is poor, though rich; unhappy, though with all outward means of happiness. With it the poor are rich, and he who has nothing may possess all things. Our hopes indeed far transcend our reasonable expectations; but what matters this, if we can live on and in our hopes? There is even in the most prosperous life a great deal of dry prose, repetition, routine, even drudgery; and it is made not only endurable, but happy, by the rhythm of our day-dreams, which sets the prose to music, and lightens weariness with song. Nor is this hopefulness mere delusion. It is rather prophecy. Our hope, God-breathed I

cannot doubt, is the earnest of a future where it will all be more than realized. It is a discount upon heaven, where our drafts will be overpaid. This buoyancy, this expectant habit of the soul, which lasts unimpaired till the active powers are crippled by age, and even then, instead of being reversed, lapses into quiet waiting, is an intensely strong confirmation of the words of eternal life that come to us from the Lord of life, and is an authentic token of immortality.

In the next place, the uncertainty of the future is a needed and perpetual stimulus in all healthful activity and enterprise. Had we our lives mapped out before us, how tame would life be, how circumscribed its endeavors, how crippled its energies! The certain, the inevitable, — how passively should we await its treasured good, how sullenly should we submit to its privations and calamities! Our nerveless toil would be carefully narrowed to the measure of what it would bring; our precautions limited to what we were foreordained to prevent. Genius, science, art, skill would have their only scope in doing what they were forced to do. It is the unforeseen that keeps our powers in vigorous exercise. The ship has her ribs of solid oak, her Cyclopean knees, her triply bolted and riveted frame, not for such roughened seas and adverse winds as she may for years encounter without

peril, but for the possible emergency when her ribs shall grind, and her knees quiver, and her frame quake, as if giant hands were clutching at every timber and prying at every crevice. The edifice, the bridge, the causeway, the lighthouse, is built, not for the safe occupancy or use that may never be disturbed, but so as to meet contingencies of every conceivable peril. Communities, governments, legislators, frame states and codes and social organisms, not with sole reference to a foreseen future, but with a provident wisdom which takes in the whole range of the possible, and thus wards off dangers, averts evils, and cherishes the germs of progressive intelligence and prosperity. That the specific good that can be attained or evil that may be averted is not foreseen, is the motive of all thorough and faithful work in every department of human activity. While we know not what will be, we employ our sagacity in determining the outside limits of what can be, and our energy in providing for or against all that there can possibly be of good or of evil. The mind is thus kept in vigorous tension in ascertaining the limits of safety, in analyzing the beneficent and the perilous objects, aspects, and tendencies in every department of nature, in establishing the dominion of human wisdom and of combined human agency over the world of which God has given man the sovereignty, and of

which he maintains the sovereignty solely by the indeterminateness of its future, and the scope thus afforded for his constructive, defensive, aggressive genius and enterprise.

Then, too, who of us is there that has any capacity or energy, who is not kept in vigorous activity and urged on to higher attainments and increased ability by his ignorance of his own future, which always presents the possibility of making that future prosperous and happy by industry, thrift, discretion, and enterprise? To be sure, the most that we shall attain will fall short of our aims. But what of that? It is what we are, not what we attain, that chiefly concerns us. And we are immeasurably more, greater, better, in mind, soul, and character, by laboring for what we shall never reach, than we could be were we to measure our strength and our steps by a distinctly foreseen future, which would always be a retarding force on our best and noblest powers and faculties.

In no department of effort would clear foresight of the future have so paralyzing an influence as in our benevolence and philanthropy. The past may teach us this. Men's endeavors for one another's good have been successful, eminently so, yet only tentatively, slowly, with perpetual failures and disappointments, which, could they have been foreseen, would have been utterly disheartening. A

very large proportion of the seed has fallen on the wayside, or among thorns, or on stony ground; yet it has done the sowers incalculable good to have cast their seed in generous handfuls, and had they not done so, the thirty, sixty, hundred fold would not have been reaped on the congenial soil. For us there is the same incalculableness of specific success, the same possibility of specific failure, which, could we forsee it, would give prudence the mastery over our benevolent impulses. Were we to count the cost and calculate the profit, we should lose the heart to give and to labor. It is well for us that in sowing beside all waters we know not how or where the increase may come, and especially, that we cannot see beforehand where our kindness shall seem to have been bestowed in vain. At all events, the good of generous bestowal and labor is ours; the example is the world's property; the revenue is certain though we cannot trace it; the harvest is laid up for us in heaven, and I have no doubt that there, for much of the seed which we thought wasted and lost, we shall find ripened wheat-sheaves.

Above all, it is of the highest worth to us morally and spiritually that we know not what a day may bring forth. He who walks about the streets of a city by daylight needs no weapon. He who has a specific danger to guard against selects his

appropriate mode of defense, and employs no other. But he who starts on a journey or voyage fraught with multitudinous and unknown perils provides himself with every attainable means and instrument of defense and protection. The history of an individual life may present a very limited range of trials, temptations, emergencies, for which much less of preparation than would make up a perfect character might suffice. Some, though very few, have no severe afflictions. Many, I suppose, pass through life with no temptations to great sins. Many have no special occasion for more energy than will sustain them on the well-worn track of respectable living. But there is not one of us for whom any possibility of sad experience, of threatened moral evil or of arduous and painful duty, may not become a reality; and this is often the case where at the outset there is not the slightest probability that life will flow otherwise than smoothly and quietly. Moreover, in these matters the words of my text are oftener than not literally verified. We know not what a day may bring forth. We have seen death with no forecast shadow, and homes even in festal array suddenly made desolate. Temptations of abnormal severity are sprung upon one without premonition, and not infrequently yielded to by those who a day before would have exclaimed indignantly, "Is thy servant a dog that

he should do this thing ? " With equal suddenness, too, are heavy responsibilities sometimes cast on shoulders that had known no burden. The only safety lies in preparation at every point. The only availing counsel is, " Put on the *whole* armor of God," and all of it is essential to perfect humanity. It may all be fitted and worn in advance of special needs; and it cannot be put on in part and by piecemeal, or taken up in haste when the emergency flashes upon us. Preparation must precede trial, must anticipate need. There are characters which can meet surprise undaunted, can pass through fiery temptation unscathed, can come off more than conquerors in any stress of trial, can bear with elastic strength the heaviest burdens of trust, care, and responsibility. In order that one be thus prepared, there must be truth and integrity, pureness and loftiness of thought, the faith in Christ which brings one into sympathy and fellowship with him, the hope of immortality, and with and above all an abiding sense of the present God, Witness, Judge, Rewarder, Father.

Now suppose the current of life unruffled, prosperous, happy, — this preparation is none the less needed; for such a life has its perils. Without religious faith and principle, an easy condition engenders a low type of character. It invites one to float on its current, aimless, unprofitable, seeking

transient pleasure as the supreme good, only to become early weary of it, to find its cisterns broken and their waters stale. There is in an uneventful, easy, non-religious life a certain type of superannuated childhood, to which age brings no maturity, and which only cumbers the ground that it may once have adorned.

The prosperous, happy, uneventful life ought to be a fountain of beneficence, in example, in influence, in active service, in benign ministries; and for this is needed precisely the same type of character, which alone can meet the adverse blasts of temptation and trial.

But for many of us the way to life, the way to heaven if we will make it so, must lie through conflict and peril; what, we know not; when, we know not. Some of us even now are in the stress of battle. For others it may be close at hand. We know not what a day may bring forth. The morrow may have that which will wrench all the springs of endurance, will test all the force of principle, will break down all frail supports of character, and will leave us in our own consciousness just what we are now in the sight of God, clothed in his armor and able to stand in the evil day, or unclothed of even such semblance of goodness as we may now possess. Be ours, then, the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.

SERMON XXVI.

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION.

A SERMON PREACHED AT THE DEDICATION OF A MONUMENT IN MEMORY OF THE YOUNG MEN OF THE PARISH WHO FELL DURING THE RECENT WAR, ON EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 1867. — [REPRINTED.]

"The power of his resurrection." — PHILIPPIANS iii. 10.

To one who studies the history of the age immediately preceding the advent of Christ, there is no more salient fact than the prevalent smallness and paltriness of character, the abounding profligacy of private morals, and, as a necessary consequence, the utter dearth of public spirit, civic virtue, and patriotism. The Jews had nothing left to glory in but the sepulchres of their fathers. The Grecian states had fallen a prey more to their own corruption than to Roman arms. In Rome it is hard to find a single name which looks great in every aspect. The man who, as philosopher, orator, statesman, patriot, held the foremost place in the last days of the republic, often amuses, often disgusts us by his vanity and egotism, and lets us see in his character fully as much to excuse and to pity as to

admire. Of his distinguished coevals there was hardly one who was not ready to pursue his own aggrandizement through rivers of fratricidal blood, or who would not rather have sacrificed his country than have held an inferior place in its counsels.

But with the risen Saviour began the rising of fallen humanity. St. Paul belongs to an order of nobility whose charter bears the signature of the resurrection-angel. He designates in our text the moulding principle, the energizing force of his life, from the day when the Lord appeared to him on the way to Damascus. His was a type of character that indicated the entrance of a new element of power into the field of human discipline and action; and he was but the greatest of a host of Christian heroes, who drew their strength from the broken sepulchre, and have transmitted like peculiar and transcendent traits of spiritual excellence all down the Christian ages.

The resurrection is not only the most conspicuous event in the history of Jesus; it is, equally, a spiritual power of intensest momentum and efficacy. It certifies us of immortality as no reasoning can. Death is not an inference, but a fact, and it needs to be confronted by fact experienced and witnessed. A visible resurrection, authenticated by those who saw it, and transmitted in enduring

record, alone can abolish death, and bring immortality to light. The resurrection of Christ, too, transfigures all the sad accompaniments and accessories of death, — the altered countenance, the mortal agony, the grave-clothes, the loneliness and desolation of the tomb ; and in the light of Easter morning they are symbols, no longer of death, but of the higher life, — no longer of the crumbling tabernacle of clay, but of the soul emancipated, ennobled, enthroned among the principalities of heaven.

The power of the resurrection is felt, first, in the appeal which it makes to hope and fear, in the certainty which it attaches to a righteous retribution, in the assurance from the lips of him who was dead and is alive again that all who are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of a happy life, they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation. This influence is not to be despised. Fear, though in due time it yields place to love, has its God-assigned office at the outset and in various emergencies of the Christian life ; and were it not so, the Divine retribution is of unspeakable worth as an intensely emphatic expression of God's regard for his own moral law, and of the identity of that law with the nature and constitution of the spiritual universe.

The power of the resurrection is next felt in determining for those who believe in it their prime objects of pursuit and endeavor. Were death a terminus, it would still be inexpedient for us to be vicious, or sordidly selfish; for vice would waste our earthly heritage prematurely, and by selfishness we should forfeit more of the common stock than it would be in our power to monopolize. We should deem it wise to cultivate the cheap and easy virtues, — those which yield an immediate revenue. But those which involve moral enterprise, heroism, arduous effort, costly sacrifice, would not be worth their price, — their earthly revenue seems so very small, and is often so very remote. But if we believe ourselves immortal, the longest investments are the best. We can welcome what is now not joyous, but grievous, for the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which it will earn for us. We are solicitous, not for what will yield immediate gratification, but for those gifts of mind and heart, those traits of spirit and life, which will be our joy and crown when we shall have risen with Christ to die no more.

The resurrection has a yet more subtile, pervading and diffusive power, exercised in great part unconsciously, affecting character in its very earliest stages, entering into the currents of thought, feeling, example, and influence in all Christian house-

holds, and, to a great extent, in every Christian community. In all growth space is an essential element. The kernel of wheat sown in a shallow vessel shoots up into a green blade, which withers and dies before it comes to flower. The acorn planted in a thick-set grove never exceeds the stature of a shrub. In like manner the soul shapes itself by the space in which it expects to grow. Bounded by the span of this earthly life, it is narrowed, dwarfed, belittled in every direction. It is conscious of small room and brief time for increase, and instinctively adapts itself to its mean and limited conditions. It strikes its tendrils into the ground, because it has no heaven toward which it can climb. It becomes sordid, because its future has in it nothing great, or lofty, or enduring. But the very child who is taught from his earliest years to believe himself immortal, though nothing may be farther from his distinct consciousness than living for immortality, yet has his infant being enlarged, exalted, strengthened by the thought. His aspirations transcend the measure of earthly possibility, nor are they checked by the fear or darkened by the shadow of death. His ideal of character takes on, without his knowing it, much of the heavenly element, and is immeasurably larger and higher than had he never heard of a life to come.

If it be not literally true that "heaven lies about

us in our infancy," where is the child that has received the rudiments of Christian culture, whose plan of life does not take in heaven; who does not inwardly mean, at all events, whatever else he may forego, not to forego a blessed immortality; whose opinions and feelings about right and wrong are not moulded and hallowed by the power of an endless life? To be sure, with sad frequency this religion of the young heart seems to be worn off by attrition with the non-religious world. Yet its fragrance lingers in the soul of the ingenuous youth, who grows up a nobler being than had heaven never been thus opened to him, with worthy impulses, broad sympathies, capacities of generous action, endurance, and sacrifice, which would not be his, had he been always accustomed to think of himself as a mere ephemeral existence. The very highest type of character is, indeed, produced only by the perpetual activity of the religious principle. But where this is wanting, the unconscious consciousness of immortality — if you will permit the seeming contradiction of terms for the great truth to which it gives expression — performs a most important and precious part in moral self-education, in the shaping and development of the principles and the affections, in the choice of pursuits, in the direction of the whole life-current of thought, feeling, and endeavor. It expands and strengthens the

extensor muscles of the manly will. It brings into full tension and activity the hardier sinews of the moral nature. It creates the capacity of heroic virtue.

I might illustrate this element of power by asking you to consider the contrast between the American and the first French Revolution. The motive and the end were the same. Both were struggles against a galling tyranny and in behalf of popular freedom. The initial watchwords and war-cries were identical. But the actors in the French Revolution had abandoned, with their faith in God, their hope of heaven. They were a host of Titans, strong and fierce, but earth-limited as earth-born. In the sacred name of their country each man fought for the gratification of his own avarice, ambition, lust, or enmity; and the result was such a carnival of rampant selfhoods as made the people a horde of sanguinary Ishmaels, converted the land into an Aceldama and a Golgotha, and merged a despotism which, bad as it was, had at least the filaments of law and order, in an anarchy, which could find no fit prototype except in the weltering chaos and the rayless night when the earth was without form and void. On the other hand, a latent faith in God and immortality made ours a generous contest for the noblest rights and the highest privileges of our race, for institutions that should nourish free souls

for the service of God and man, for homes and schools and altars that should train successive generations equally for earth and for heaven.

This same principle has been exemplified in our recent conflict, and could not but have been verified in its issue. Long as the fortune of war seemed against us, we never doubted our ultimate success; and if we were to analyze the grounds of our hope, they would resolve themselves into the power of the resurrection. We expected to prevail, not because of our physical superiority, but because the principles for which we were driven to do battle were such as recognized the rights of all men as God's immortal children, and thus appealed with irresistible cogency to the heart and conscience of every man who felt himself to be immortal; while Slavery, in reducing its victim-race to a serfdom of mind and soul, could have justified itself only by denying the immortal destiny and heavenly birthright of the enslaved.

Most fittingly have you chosen Easter Sunday for the special commemoration of the young men from your own families and your household of faith, who became immortal in this great war of freedom. When you recall their beautiful promise, the vigor of their glorious manhood, the noble self-surrender of their patriotism, the traits of strength and loveliness, the sweet domestic virtues, the tender bonds

of sonship, brotherhood, and kindred, which made their sacrifice so precious and so costly, you cannot but feel that they became what they were under the sunbeams that shine ever from the broken sepulchre of the Lord. In a community on which that light had never risen, in a congregation of unbelievers, you could not have had such sons and brothers to give to your country, nor would such as might have been yours have responded to the country's call in her hour of peril. They went from you, not because the peaceful fields of honorable ambition were closed against them, — not because the camp and bivouac offered aught that was congenial with their nature or their tastes, — not because the profession of arms was in any sense their choice; for to most of them it was in itself undesired, unwelcome, and embraced with the clear consciousness of postponement, disadvantage, and loss, perhaps irretrievable, as to their life-aims. Had they been the sordid, mean-spirited youth which an earth-bounded horizon must have made them, they would have left mere hirelings to take their places on the tented field and at the cannon's mouth, and have remained at home to reap the rich mercantile harvest gathered by almost every one who has thrust in his sickle. They knew, as thoroughly as we know now, what they were giving to the public cause. They knew, as we did not know then, the

imminent stress of their peril. They counted not their lives dear, if those lives might be the purchase of their country's life.

They knew, too, in dying, that for such disinterested self-sacrifice there was a better resurrection. Nor have they fallen in vain; nor have they failed, even on earth, of the better resurrection. In them have been already verified the Saviour's words: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Mere brute force might have been superior in the field; but there are fruits of victory, which could have grown and ripened only from such seed-corn as you have sown in tears. The pure, generous, noble youth who gave their bodies to the earth, their souls to God, live in the higher type of manhood, the loftier aims, the more worthy purposes, the more strenuous and faithful life-work, of those who stood at their side, of the still younger men who are coming forward into their vacant places. Many of the living will forever bless the dead for the heritage of their virtues. Not one has fallen whose mantle rests not on a goodly company of his fellows. And did we not all need that our country should be redeemed at such a price, to make us feel its worth, to rouse us from our supineness under national guilt and evil, to show us the atrocity of the great public wrong

and sin that grew so long under our passive acquiescence, to awaken our slumbering patriotism, and to reveal to us the blessedness of our free institutions, — now for the first time free indeed, and shedding the pure radiance of their beacon-fire for oppressed and struggling nations? Cost and worth are correlative terms. "Ye are bought with a price" is the watchword for civic virtue no less than for Christian piety.

Yes, the dead shall rise, our dead men shall live, in the vigilance which shall guard our public integrity and well-being, in the strong hands by which the ark of our liberty shall be upborne, in the religion of patriotism which shall pervade the homes and hearts of the bereaved, of those who in tender sympathy have shared their sorrow, of those in near and distant generations who will look with reverence and gratitude on the monument you this day consecrate, and on like structures in our churches, our halls, our places of public concourse, all over the land. In thus honoring the departed, you admonish and instruct, you ennoble and energize the living, the yet unborn. The heroes who have gone from you still and ever speak, and their dying sacrifice shall be renewed in unnumbered living, and if there again be need (which Heaven forefend!), dying sacrifices for liberty, peace, and union.

The Lord's resurrection has a more intimate les-

son of comfort and hope for the many bereaved households, the record of whose grief and glory is inscribed on yonder tablet. Of what you so worthily cherished nothing is lost, — not one trait of beauty, not one germ of promise, not one budding virtue, not one pure and holy love. He that loseth his life for duty shall find it in the life eternal. He who took the faithful and excellent from you keeps them for you. They are still in the same universal house of God with you, and there are even now from room to room avenues along which love and intercession may pass and repass. In one house now, in God's good time you shall all be in one room. While you wait, oh, praise and serve and follow your risen Saviour, him in whom your dead live, him in whom the whole family in heaven and earth is now and forever one.

SERMON XXVII.

VOICES OF THE DEAD.

A SERMON PREACHED ON JUNE 2, 1867, BEING THE SUNDAY AFTER THE DECEASE OF THOMAS BULFINCH. — [REPRINTED.]

"By it he being dead yet speaketh." — HEBREWS xi. 4.

"BY it," that is, by faith, and by that moral, spiritual excellence which is the fruit of faith.

Not only had Abel's name come down in the Hebrew records as that of a true worshiper and faithful servant of Jehovah; but his early and (humanly speaking) untimely death had been among the events pointing to a higher life; for if those whom God loves die young, death, it was argued, can be only translation; and if the best men prosper the least in this world, it must be because another realm of prosperous and happy being is reserved for them. Thus his example was doubly instructive and precious, at once showing the way, and pointing to the end, of a virtuous life, — illustrating the rule of duty, and suggesting the highest and strongest motive for obeying it.

When our friends are called away from us, we

are prone to use that saddest of all words, — *lost.* We are too little apt to perceive and confess how much of them there is that remains to us, how much that could not die, how much that will grow even more vivid and precious as the years roll on, and will verify with an ever increasing fullness the words, " He, being dead, yet speaketh."

Let us now consider some of the ways in which we, who lament the absence from our sight of the faithful and excellent, may hope to find these words fulfilled.

In the first place, I think that we understand the characters of our friends better, after they have gone from us, than while they were with us, and that they thus speak to us in their examples with greater precision and emphasis. Take the instance of one whom none knew but to praise and love. To praise and love is not to understand. The life may have been one of incessant and various occupation, and the transactions and utterances of every day may have been regarded with warm approval, and have ministered to the growth of the most sincere and fond affection ; but they have been beheld in themselves rather than in their motives and principles, and as separate incidents rather than as the expression and outflow of a nobly framed and consistent character. Thus, as we pass through the streets of a town or city, the eye takes in single ob-

jects, but not the site, or plan, or general features. For these we must seek an elevated position, from which minute details will disappear or dwindle, while great outlines and characteristics will be plain and clear. Death gives us this elevation as to human character. We before knew, it may be, that the life was beautiful and lovely; we now see why it was so, — what was its pervading spirit, what its sacred laws of speech and action, what the great lessons of duty that it teaches, — the golden threads which held the whole together, and gave symmetry and unity to the endlessly varied forms of utterance and activity. And how intense the emphasis which death gives to the cardinal virtues of one whom we had tenderly loved, and especially to the one predominant trait, be it conscientiousness, or gentleness, or fortitude, or courage, or benevolence, or spirituality! We now see how that trait branched out in various directions, assumed different phases, gave energy and vividness to the other virtues, at once fostering them, and in turn fostered by them; and a voice comes to us from the yet recent, and in after years from the still cherished grave, commending to us that special aspect of goodness, urging it upon us as the due tribute of undying human love no less than of piety, and rebuking us for every departure from it.

Nor let it be said that this peculiar sacredness

attached to any single trait of excellence is adapted to make one-sided and deficient characters. For, in the first place, the virtues are a sociable sisterhood, and cannot well live apart, so that one of them sedulously wooed and won brings in all her sisters with her, she remaining only first among equals; and, secondly, the individuality which distinguishes one good man from another, and among the most excellent makes one star differ from another, when not in the degree, in the kind of glory, consists in the predominance of some single virtue, while the others are not wanting, and in the peculiar tone and grouping created by this predominance.

It is, therefore, an infinite gain and benefit, if death has so endeared to us any one form or aspect of goodness, any special cluster of Christian graces, that we cannot contentedly remain in that regard defective or faulty; for while this form, or aspect, or cluster may determine the order and proportion of our virtues, it will not suffer us in any department of duty to be barren and unfruitful.

In the next place, our friends who have gone before us to heaven speak especially to us of the need and worth of Christian faith and piety, and no living words can equal in impressiveness the tacit pleading of death. When a life closes, the inquiry which seems to be awakened at once in

every heart, even in the irreligious and the reckless, is, "Was the departed prepared to die?" I have been struck with this, when the great men of our land — high officials, renowned orators, accomplished statesmen — have been called away. The first communications that circulate in the public prints are dying words and manifestations as to religion, and whatever incidents in the whole past career can have any bearing on the religious character; and either the due eulogy upon a Christian life and spirit, or the honest, though feeble attempt to piece out a rainbow over the death-flood from shreds and patches of half-luminous mist, precedes all discussion of public merits and services. I have often been most painfully impressed by this tendency in private circles, where the departed had manifested no special regard for religion, but friends have tortured into grounds of hope the utterances of weariness of life drawn out by pain, or momentary exclamations, or isolated virtuous acts, or passive admissions of the truth, in fine, everything that did not bear on its face an absolutely irreligious import. But when one who has indeed lived as a Christian passes away, what comfort can equal that which flows from the assurance that our friend has found in death the very gate of heaven? How lovingly do we dwell on the early consecration to the Saviour, the marks of his

lineage and kindred, the expressions of faith unfeigned and hope anchored within the veil, the traits of Christian fidelity that made the life luminous, the path which we can now see reaching on from the death-hour and through the death-shadow to the assembly of the redeemed and the presence of the glorified Redeemer! We then feel and own that religion is indeed the one thing needful for the mortal who is to put on immortality, — that there is nothing in life so precious as that which fits one to die in peace and hope, — that all things are to be accounted as worthless in comparison with that in the aim and spirit through which one wins Christ, and is found in him. There is thus impressed upon us a profounder sense than comes to us through any other agency, of the infinite importance of personal piety, — of a soul at peace with God, and sustained by an immortal hope.

Has this lesson been sent home to any of our hearts by God's death-angel? Has there gone up, in our grief, fervent gratitude that our friend was one whom the Lord loved, and for whom death was but translation beyond the power of death? Oh, let it be our life-lesson, our directory for all time to come, our preparation for our own last hour and closing scene. Over our lifeless forms there will be like solemn thought and anxious inquiry. What our surviving friends will most yearn to

know will be whether we fall asleep in Jesus. Shall we die, and leave no sign? Oh, let it be our life-aim and life-work so to order our conversation here that there shall be only trust and hope for us when we die, and that what is felt for us shall be only the counterpart of the fullness of joy into which we awake from the death-slumber.

Again, our friends who have gone before us to heaven speak to us of the reality of heaven. We may believe the promises of God, but never with so realizing a faith as when those who have been unspeakably dear to us have gone from us to inherit the promises. If there were a shade of skepticism before, it now passes away; for we feel assured that so much excellence and loveliness cannot have died, — that one so admirably fitted for life cannot have been stricken from the ranks of the living, — that so true and pure and high an education of the spirit cannot have been matured and perfected for the earth-clods to cover, — that such powers of usefulness cannot have been developed, except for a larger, loftier sphere, — that a stewardship of earthly trusts so faithfully discharged cannot but have been merged in a stewardship of wider scope and for nobler uses. We always think of such a friend as in heaven; and one such argument can withstand the assault of every doubt and of every form of sophistry. I well knew a very old man, of

marked acumen and ability, who, from early fanaticism, passed, through a long ordeal of skepticism, to a more rational faith in his declining years, but who, when he had lost his hold on almost everything else that was sacred, still held unchanged the belief in immortality, sustained by the grave and memory of his devout parents, and was wont through life to repeat and apply to himself the line of Cowper,

"The son of parents passed into the skies."

Nor is this all. Not only the belief, but the imagination is quickened through the ministry of death. Heaven seems nearer to us, and assumes more life-like forms to our thought, when it is the home of those who have here been the life and joy of our household circles. It is no longer the far-away, dimly conceived possibility that it may have been when our affections had little or no special property there; but the veil is at times withdrawn and never wholly replaced; luminous forms, in the likeness of those no longer with us in the body, pass in clear vision before us, and wonted voices cry, "Come up hither." Our affections will not part with their treasure, but mount where the beloved have passed in, follow where they have gone before, and, in vivid hope, take possession where they had marked the way.

There is, also, a surviving influence of the pure and true, the devout and faithful, which remains with us when they go from us, and which time often only confirms and deepens. At first, the feeling is that they have wholly passed away, — that the voice which has been so blessedly efficient to counsel, comfort, and gladden, is forever silent, — that for the presence withdrawn there is only utter and cheerless desolation. But, as we return to the ordinary routine of life, we find that the spirit of the departed is at our side. The accustomed voice pulses upon the inward ear. What the friend separated from us would have said, his well-known tone and style of sentiment, opinion and principle, his earnest preference in this direction, his strong disesteem in that, — all come vividly to our thought, and are, if possible, a more sacred law to us, because impressed by the solemn sanction of death and memory. An even, uniform, thoroughly disciplined character thus makes itself felt years and years after the seal of death has been stamped upon it, and an unseen guidance, restraint, support, help, and comfort, thus often complete and crown the earthly work of those who seem to have been taken before their time, and to have left a large part of their work undone.

With these thoughts I cannot help connecting that of a still more intimate conversance between

the dead and the living. Heaven may be a place, for aught we know to the contrary; but it is still more a state, and one of its prime elements must needs be an enlarged power of perception, cognizance, and activity. It must be heaven wherever the pure and happy spirit dwells, or moves, or stays. And must not the deathless love of those who go from us to the Lord keep them virtually with us, cognizant of what concerns our true well-being, watchful of our path, our trials and temptations, our success and progress? Were this wanting, would not heaven be less than heaven? Can heaven have a greater joy than this, when surviving kindred remain in sympathy with the departed, and those on either side of the death-river move on with even step, on the same path, toward the same goal, — those on earth assured of the fellowship of their friends who have passed on; those in heaven blending their prayer and praise with the uttered and the voiceless worship of those who have not yet put off the earthly tabernacle?

We know not how far God's spiritual administration may be, like his outward Providence, through agents or mediators. But if there be guardian and ministrant angels, hosts of God that encamp around us, messengers from him to the souls of men, who are so likely to stand in that office to us as those who, while they lived on earth,

were as angels of God to us, — whose ministries for us were those of heavenly purity, faithfulness, and love? Thus may they, being dead, speak to us in breathings of peace, and strength, and joy, — in influences that energize and guide, comfort and gladden, — in messages from the Father to the souls which he has bound with them in a union too sacred to be suspended even by death.

Among the dead, who by their faith and piety still and ever speak, I know that your thoughts, as well as my own, have rested on one whom you have seldom, and I, till now, never missed from his accustomed seat in this sanctuary; in whose life we have seen the beauty of holiness, and whose example of Christian excellence death will, I trust, embalm in enduring life-likeness in the memory of all of us who revered and loved him. Though the eulogy of private merit is seldom becoming in the pulpit, I know you would be unwilling that he should pass from you without special commemoration. Attached to this church through an honored ancestry, who, for several successive generations, were worshipers and office-bearers here, — separated from your communion only during a few years of early manhood passed in a distant city, — bearing an important part in the several revisions of your liturgy, — loving your discipline and order of divine service as preëminently true to the teachings

and spirit of our common Christian faith, — the cherished friend of all your pastors since your separation from the English Church, — he can have left none more intimately conversant, or more closely identified with your history.

I cannot speak at length of his pure taste, his generous culture, his high literary attainments, his skill and success as an author. These won for him distinguished praise and honor; and what he accomplished so admirably in his leisure hours might well awaken the regret that his ambition was not equal to his ability, or that scholarly pursuits had not been his business instead of his recreation.

But, in this sacred presence, I would rather remind you of those things in which we have seen in him the spirit of his Divine Master, — of his tender conscientiousness, his serenity and sweetness of temper, his heart-coined courtesy of mien and manner, his reverent love of God's Word and ordinances, his diffusive benevolence, manifested not only in gifts more than proportioned to his ability, but in look, and word, and deed, in protracted and self-denying endeavor, in every form and way in which he could make those around him happier and better. Faults he may have had; but who can name them? Have we known one who seemed more entirely blameless? — one of whom, as we look back on his finished course, we can say with a

richer fullness of meaning, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright"?

Ever on the watch for, or, I would rather say, by the instinct of his religious consciousness ever spontaneously aware of, the opportunities for kindness, he made his daily intercourse a ministry of Christian love. His careful and considerate offices of friendship, in timely counsel and genial sympathy, have been unspeakably precious, not only to those who could proffer the title of kinship or established intimacy, but to very many whose need was their only claim. There are those who owe all their success in life to his early encouragement, his advice and instruction at forming or critical periods of their career, his helping hand over steep and rough passages of their way. In his modesty, he loved to feel himself a debtor to his friends, that he might seem to be discharging, while conferring an obligation. So entirely had thought for the happiness of others become the pervading habit of his life, that on his death-bed one of his last inquiries was, who among his friends would be most gratified by the gift of some beautiful spring-flowers gathered by loving hands to be laid upon his pillow.

We cannot but recognize in him a rare combination of the amenities and graces which constitute that very highest style of man, the Christian gentleman. I use the word *gentleman*, because to my

mind it bears even a sacred significance, and I would that it were employed to designate only that politeness — at once lofty and lowly, self-respecting and deferential, heart-felt and heart-meant, shaping look, word, tone, and manner from the inspiration of an all-embracing charity — which is derived from communion with him in whom gentleness in all human relations was the type and token of the incarnate Divinity. This Christian gentleness, this *urbanity* betokening a denizenship of the heavenly city, so characterized our friend, that one could hardly look upon his clear brow and transparent, benignant countenance, still less enter into even transient conversation with him, and not take knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus.

While we mourn his departure in the midst of his usefulness, we yet cannot but be thankful that he was called hence while his removal could be so sadly felt by so many hearts, — before the light of life had begun to grow dim, or its power to become enfeebled. We would not, God willing, that to a volume of life so fairly written, and rounded to so beautiful a close, there should have been a melancholy appendix of decline and infirmity. Above all, we are thankful in the assurance that for one who so made it "Christ to live," it must have been "gain to die." Brethren, let us be "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

SERMON XXVIII.

HENRY WILDER FOOTE.

PREACHED ON WHITSUNDAY, JUNE 9, 1889, IN COMMEMORATION OF REV. HENRY WILDER FOOTE. — [REPRINTED.]

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." — REV. xiv. 4.

So wrote the seer in his vision of heaven; and is there not in these words the genuine life-record of the dear pastor and friend who has gone from us? Seldom has one passed away for whom the death-change meant so little. A rich heritage of parental and ancestral piety he made his own by his early self-consecration; and as a close, loyal, loving follower of Christ, he lived on earth and lives on in heaven. His was a character that could have been formed in no other school than that of Christ, — rich, not only in the robust and hardy virtues belonging to him who appears in prophetic metaphor as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, but equally in the gentler graces, the finer lines and more delicate tints, the meekness, sweetness, loveliness, endeared to us in the image of the Lamb of God. I have known him and loved him from his

infancy; and, as we had lived in dear friendship and unbroken intimacy for many years, it was my hope that in God's good time he would perform for me those last offices of piety which it was my sad privilege to perform for him.

While his and my friend, his coeval and schoolmate,[1] will give you precious reminiscences of all that they had in common and of that heart-union too close for death to part, I want to speak to you especially of his work as a minister. In the pulpit he was preëminently a Christian minister, regarding himself as standing in his Lord's place, delivering his message, dispensing the treasures of his gospel, and with the supreme endeavor to be a faithful steward of the divine mysteries committed to his charge. He sought not popularity; he catered not for applause; he cared not to attract the public eye or ear. But he watched for souls, — for the avenues of access to heart and conscience, for the spiritual wants and needs of those to whom he ministered. He spoke the truth in love. Yet he used great plainness of speech. His rebukes and warnings were direct and unsparing, and they were aimed, not, as is the habit of the time-serving pulpit, at the sins of other communities and classes of people, but at precisely the temptations, defects, faults, delinquencies, to which his own hearers were

[1] Rev. George L. Chaney.

specially liable; and such words of his always went to the heart, because they came from the heart and bore the impress at once of loving earnestness and of sacred obligation. His sermons had superior artistical and literary merit. They were carefully planned, thoughtfully elaborated, gracefully written, and never without the manifest purpose of teaching, convincing, persuading, comforting, or edifying his hearers; and, while their average standard was high, I have often listened to sermons of his which I wanted all the world to hear. I have in distinct remembrance a series of sermons on the Lord's Prayer, so redolent of devout thought and feeling, so full of ethical wisdom, so clear in the presentation of eternal truths in their relations to our own time and condition, that, if published, they would have won a cherished and permanent place in our best religious literature. He showed a rare felicity in his sermons on special occasions, whether in commemoration of the dead or at epochs of peculiar historical interest. His sketches of character and his tributes to those of precious memory who have gone from us can never be forgotten, nor can we fail to recognize with gratitude his chief part in the bi-centennial celebration of this church, with the discourses that preceded the memorial day.

His loyal service to this church as its historiogra-

pher will be thankfully owned when we all shall have passed away, and I cannot but believe that the benefits derived from his pastorate will be still more enduring. I speak not now of what he has done for individual souls, which has a diffusive power God only knows how wide, and lasts on through eternity. But I refer to what he has effected for the permanent prosperity of the church as a religious organization, with its own peculiar place, mission, and methods. His settlement occurred when the westward trend of the Protestant population was occasioning important, perilous, and in some instances disastrous changes in most of the older churches in the city. Dead conservatism in your minister would have stranded this church in respectable and stately, but inevitable decay; while the rash enterprise of headstrong progress might have saved the name of the church, by forsaking its venerable site, abjuring its hallowed associations, and despoiling the beauty of holiness which still marks, and, I trust, always will mark, its Sunday worship and its solemn feasts. For you the only wise conservatism was progressive; the only safe progress was conservative. This blending of the two elements so often ruinously disjoined was, I will not say your minister's policy (for policy, though in itself a good word, is commonly used to denote what he was incapable of), but it was in ac-

cordance with his character, his principles, his reverence for all that is truly venerable, his earnest, unresting, yearning philanthropy. The growing adaptation to the needs and demands of the times has been gradual, stepwise, but with each step so carefully measured in advance that there has been no retrograde movement. He felt that, whatever might be fitting in a new congregation, wonted and inherited rights of possession, occupancy, and control should not be rudely disturbed, yet at the same time that a church has for its only legitimate charter the gospel of propagandism, "Freely ye have received; freely give." His aim, and a successful aim, has been to make your organization, with no essential change of form, a centre and source of widely extended Christian endeavor and influence. The hospitality of the church to strangers has become generally known, and is made largely availing at all seasons, and especially in the summer; and it was Mr. Foote's desire, in which I know that he was cordially seconded by some of you with whom he took counsel, to keep the church open through the summer for the benefit of those transiently in the city, and especially of the great and increasing number of those who cannot obtain regular sittings at such churches as they would prefer to attend. In the same spirit, the church has been fitted for evening use, opened for mid-week worship,

and made the meeting-place for various associations of charity, social reform, and beneficent effort.

The courses of Sunday afternoon sermons which our pastor has arranged from year to year, while they have been of eminent usefulness to large congregations, have been a means of strength to the church, keeping it in the broader fellowship of the saints, in sympathy with the best minds and hearts in various communions,[1] — affording a living illustration of the virtual unity of Christian faith under differing names, and an efficient protest against that narrow, mean sectarian separatism which it is hard to tolerate anywhere, but which is nowhere so pitiful and despicable as under the name and profession of liberality.

In the broad field of the world's charities, you have had in every direction your minister's leadership, constant sympathy, and active furtherance. It has been his earnest endeavor to enlist you all in actual Christian work, not by mere contributions in money, but by your giving yourselves, always more precious and availing than anything else that you can bestow, and immeasurably enhancing the value of whatever you may give beside. Much of this work has been done in ways on which there is

[1] Mr. Foote's own words were: "I have tried to make King's Chapel stand in its place in the kingdom of Christ, and in fellowship with all Christians."

no trumpet-sounding, — service which has its only record in grateful hearts on earth and in the book of life in heaven, — labor for the sick poor, for the neglected boys on the street, for heathendom at the North End, for homes that are unhomelike, for children orphaned by the worse than death of their parents. No cause of human welfare ever failed of your minister's advocacy, and his action in such behalf was not the mere yielding to benevolent impulse, but a service with mind no less than with heart, with a judgment hardly ever at fault, and with a perseverance that never lost sight of a worthy end till it was attained.

In these matters, in his whole professional life, in the various complications that occur even in the most peaceful and happy ministry, we who have known him well have witnessed equal discretion and firmness. Because he never uttered an ungentle word, he may have seemed pliant and easy to be persuaded, and so he was as regarded things in which only his own comfort, ease, or pleasure was involved ; but when there was a question of right, or of expediency on the verge of right, or when the interests of others were concerned, it was impossible to move him from a judgment deliberately formed. When he had weighed the matter in hand with conscientious care, his *yes*, once said, meant *yes*, and his *no* meant *no*.

This, however, is but one aspect of the singleness of aim which gave tone to his whole character and conduct. He looked at no side-issues. He enjoyed the approval, the love, the warm devotedness which he could not but win; yet these never entered into the motive power which actuated him. A conscience that should be the voice of God that justifieth would have sufficed for him, had all the world been against him, and did suffice for him in the trials, misappreciations, and disappointments, which, as every minister knows, are the common lot of the profession, even where it seems, as with him, crowned with the most abundant success and honor.

I need not say what he has been as a pastor. There cannot be a home in his flock where he has not been unspeakably dear, and especially where there has been suffering or affliction, his tender sympathy is associated in the most loving memory with the comfort from God and Christ that he has carried to the stricken heart.

Nor are the least of his ministries those that have come to us since we have ceased to hear his voice. The entireness of his resignation, his sweet serenity, the triumph of an undoubting faith and an unclouded hope, have set their seal upon the gospel that he preached, and demonstrated it to be the power of God unto salvation.

His ministry has been much broader than in his modesty he can ever have imagined. A light so pure, so brilliant, could not but shine as a beacon fire far and wide. I knew that it was so; yet, since he went from us, the testimonies to that effect have been multiplied beyond my thought. The effluence of his saintly spirit was felt wherever he was known. Persons whose connection with him was transient and seemed very slight speak of the good that he has done them. A former minister of a (so-called) orthodox church in Salem, who did not know him then, told me a day or two ago of young people in his church who used to ascribe the best that was in them to their acquaintance with Henry Foote. Like testimony comes to me from various quarters where I least expected it. Love for him and grief for his loss have leveled sectarian fences. Ministers and Christians of every name claim a property in him as of their own spiritual kindred. Prayers were offered for him during his illness in churches where his voice was never heard; and for months I have hardly met a brother minister of any form or creed who has not paused to make anxious inquiry for him while he remained here, and to express love and sorrow since his departure.

Oh, could only such lives, such characters, be multiplied, though Christians may still not all think

alike, there would be in the hearts of the faithful but one fold, as there is but one Shepherd, — nay, but one fold on earth and in heaven; for

> "One family we dwell in Him,
> One church above, beneath."

If our sad task were to be performed, what more fitting time for it than Whitsunday, the birthday of the Christian Church, the beginning of that line of holy men ordained by the Spirit of God to evangelize the world? Of this sacred lineage, through the might of that same Spirit our dear friend has wrought righteousness, obtained promises, overcome the fear and the power of death, and entered into the rest that remaineth for the people of God. May that Spirit breathe its own peace in the home made desolate, in the many hearts deeply smitten by God's afflictive providence, in the church bereaved of its shepherd; and, while the faithful fail and the godly cease from among us, may it keep still unbroken the succession of those who, in the kindred and love of Christ, shall do his work and fulfill his joy!

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